

Hafa Adai!

Docomo Pacific donates \$5K for Red Cross gala. **PAGE 2**

'Use Senate's impeachment rules for Fitial in Torres' trial' **PAGE 3**

\$1

Saipan Tribune

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THURSDAY JANUARY 20, 2022

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Two more tested positive on Rota

Two additional individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19 via travel testing, bringing the total to eight on Rota, according to a Rota Health Center news release yesterday. The individuals have been isolated and are now being monitored.

A total of two close contacts of the two new cases were identified and both tested negative for COVID-19. RHC conducted 13 PCR tests on Jan. 18, 2022.

See TWO on Page 4

43 new positive cases in NMI

Forty-three more individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI total to 4,014 cases since March 26, 2020. The individuals have been isolated and are actively monitored, according to a Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. news release late Tuesday night.

US faces wave of omicron deaths in coming weeks, models say

By CARLA K. JOHNSON
AP MEDICAL WRITER

The fast-moving omicron variant may cause less severe disease on average, but CO-

VID-19 deaths in the U.S. are climbing and modelers forecast 50,000 to 300,000 more Americans could die by the time the wave subsides in mid-March.

The seven-day rolling aver-

age for daily new COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. has been trending upward since mid-November, reaching nearly 1,700 on Jan. 17—still below

See US on Page 4

All 43 cases were identified on Jan. 17, 2022. Of that number, 28 were identified via contact tracing, five via

MVA: We're being stripped of funds that were already short to begin with

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority has expressed grave concern for House Bill 22-91 that would reprogram money from the department's fiscal year 2022 budget to fund the bonuses for CNMI retirees.

During an MVA board meeting last Tuesday, MVA chair Viola Alepuyo said the bill, which passed the House of Representatives last week, essentially strips the MVA

See MVA on Page 4

community testing, and 10 via travel testing. Two of these cases were identified on Tinian and two on Rota. The vaccination statuses of the 43 cases are pending verification.

In Guam, the Joint Informa-

See 43 on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:55pm, Jan. 19, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **98.1%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,326
Fully Vaccinated:	36,036
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,312
Fully Vaccinated:	5,126
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,118

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	24,218	815	25,033
Recovered	19,411	77	19,488
Active	4,454	815	5,269
Deaths	274	2	276

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,971	43	4,014
Traced via Travel Screening	442	10	452
Traced via Community Screening	3,529	33	3,562
Deaths	21	0	21

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>



MAKING SPEED BUMPS VISIBLE

The field crew of the Office of Minority of Leader Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan) and Precinct 1 minority Reps. Joseph Flores (Ind-Saipan), Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan), and Roy Ada (R-Saipan) repaint the speed bumps in the village of Koblerville as part of their Speed Bump Visibility Project. The group also worked to clear the road shoulders leading into Saipan Southern High School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

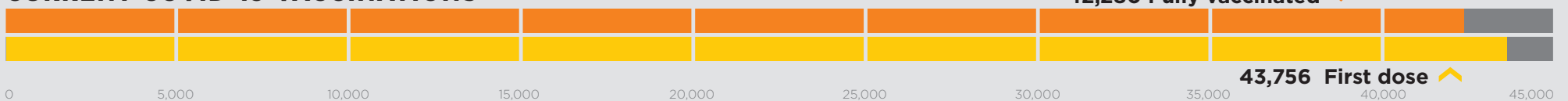
COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



INSIDE



BUSINESS

The U.S. has quietly launched its website for Americans to request free COVID-19 tests.

Page 12



WORLD

Tonga appears to have avoided the widespread devastation many had feared.

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ENVIRONMENT

The last seven years have been the warmest on record, with 2021 ranking fifth among those

Page 14



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Local



JOSHUA SANTOS

Representatives of the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter and Docomo Pacific Saipan share a photo at Docomo's Gualo Rai location after Docomo handed over a \$5,000 check toward the NMI Chapter's "Red Cross Gala" set for Feb. 26. Picture includes American Red Cross-NMI Chapter chairperson Mable Glenn; American Red Cross-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh; American Red Cross-NMI Chapter co-chairperson Dr. Bobby Cruz; Docomo Pacific CNMI brand manager and American Red Cross-NMI Chapter board member Brent Deleon Guerrero; and Docomo Pacific general manager Pauline Johnson

Docomo Pacific donates \$5K for Red Cross gala

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Docomo Pacific handed over a \$5,000 check yesterday to the American Red Cross-Northern Mariana Islands Chapter that will go toward the chapter's "Red Cross Gala" on Feb. 26.

American Red Cross-NMI Chapter and Docomo representatives who were present for the handoff at Docomo's Gualo Rai location included American Red Cross-NMI Chapter chairperson Mable Glenn; American Red Cross-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh; Docomo Pacific CNMI brand manager and American Red Cross-NMI Chapter board member Brent Deleon Guerrero; and Docomo Pacific general manager Pauline Johnson.

In an interview yesterday, Hirsh said that Docomo has been a "very long-time supporter" of the Red Cross, being involved with the NMI Chapter's mission work for over 20 years now.

"We're just so grateful to Brent [Deleon Guerrero], Pauline [Johnson], and everyone here on the Docomo team that they can help support the humanitarian mission, because [the money] that they're donating [is] really going right back out to the community to help people, and that's the way it should be," he said.

As an American Red Cross-NMI Chapter board member and CNMI brand manager for Docomo Pacific, Deleon Guerrero said it was nice to see his employer commit to

and support organizations like the Red Cross. This is Deleon Guerrero's first year as an American Red Cross-NMI Chapter board member.

"It's nice to see that I work for an employer who supports these kinds of missions and to also [work for] an employer who doesn't wait for any disasters to go in and make an effort to assist the Red Cross," he said.

Johnson said she and Docomo are "very happy and actually fortunate" to have raised \$5,000 to go toward the American Red Cross. With several events being cancelled that would have taken place pre-pandemic, Johnson said Docomo was able to migrate funds that would have gone to these cancelled events and make a generous donation to the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter and its gala. Johnson added that Docomo hopes to match the amount for future donations.

According to Hirsh, the Feb. 26 dinner event at Kensington Hotel Saipan will be a celebration of local frontliners, from firefighters to anyone in the CNMI who has worked in customer service since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hirsh added that the chapter's gala has five sponsors as of yesterday, with Docomo being one of the larger donors.

For those interested in sponsoring the event and having tables/seats at the gala, the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter asks you to email Glenn at mable.glenn@redcross.org or call the NMI Chapter office at 670-234-3459.

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'Use Senate's impeachment rules for Fitial in Torres' trial'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Sens. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) pre-filed Tuesday a resolution to adopt the Senate impeachment rules of procedure that had already been adopted for then-governor Benigno R. Fitial for the impeachment trial of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

In their Senate Resolution 22-14, DeLeon Guerrero and Manglona seeks to use the Impeachment Rules of Procedure that the 18th Senate had already adopted in 2013 for Fitial, who was the first CNMI governor to be impeached. Fitial resigned on Feb. 20, 2013, just days before the start of his impeachment trial at the Senate on charges of corruption, felony, and neglect of duty.

DeLeon Guerrero and Manglona said it is in the best interest of the Commonwealth to expeditiously conduct the impeachment trial proceeding pursuant to House of Representatives Resolution 22-14, impeaching Torres for commission of felonies, corruption, and neglect of duty, to prevent any further delay.

The House impeached Torres last Jan. 12 on a tally of 15 "yes" votes, four "no" votes, and one abstention. The House transmitted the articles of impeachment outlined in House Resolution 22-14 to the Senate last Jan. 14.

DeLeon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday: "The pre-filed rules in my opinion provides a readily available working instrument that I am hopeful would be considered."

DeLeon Guerrero and Manglona stated in the resolution that the CNMI Constitution requires the Senate to promulgate and adopt rules of procedure to address the articles of impeachment and conduct the trial.

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), who as then-Senate president in the 18th Senate, created a special committee on impeachment to draft the impeachment rules for the trial of Fitial.

DeLeon Guerrero and Manglona said that Torres, as then senator, was appointed to chair the 18th Senate special committee on impeachment rules. The other members of the committee were senators Francisco Q. Cruz, Pete P. Reyes, and Jovita M. Taimanao.

Under DeLeon Guerrero's and Manglona's proposed Senate impeachment rules, House Speaker Edmund S.

Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) has to elect or designate House managers (representatives) to prosecute the articles of im-

peachment. The Senate has to appoint a senator to be the judge to serve as presiding trial officer in the impeach-

ment trial.

The House managers or counsel on their behalf shall be the House prosecutor. The

House prosecutor may select staff to assist in prosecuting the articles of impeachment, including House staff.

If two-thirds of those elected to the Senate sustain one or more articles of impeachment

See USE on Next Page

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<p>2018 KIA FORTE LX</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$14,995 13,602 MILES STK: 18HS951 KBB: \$18,632</p>	<p>2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 38,500 MILES STK: 21D019C KBB: \$19,253</p>	<p>2019 HYUNDAI KONA SPORT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$19,995 48,475 MILES STK: 21H047A KBB: \$22,582</p>	<p>2019 HYUNDAI TUCSON GLS AWD</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$26,995 32,501 MILES STK: 22M017A KBB: \$27,844</p>
<p>2018 KIA FORTE LX</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$17,995 15,501 MILES STK: 17P372 KBB: \$18,632</p>	<p>2020 HYUNDAI VENUE</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 8,383 MILES STK: 21D082A KBB: \$21,071</p>	<p>2019 HYUNDAI ELANTRA TURBO</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$21,995 30,501 MILES STK: 19P371 KBB: \$23,606</p>	<p>2015 JEEP WRANGLER SPORT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$27,995 70,502 MILES STK: 5P279 KBB: \$32,299</p>
<p>2017 KIA SPORTAGE EX</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 51,470 MILES STK: 17P372 KBB: \$23,611</p>	<p>2017 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 62,261 MILES STK: 17P365 KBB: \$19,752</p>	<p>2018 MAZDA CX-5 SPORT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$22,995 13,002 MILES STK: 22M002A KBB: \$22,440</p>	<p>2019 MAZDA MAZDA6 GT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$28,995 27,105 MILES STK: 22M021A KBB: \$29,936</p>
<p>2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 10,785 MILES STK: 18HS888 KBB: \$19,353</p>	<p>2020 MITSUBISHI MIRAGE G4</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 18,418 MILES STK: 20R277 KBB: \$16,607</p>	<p>2018 TOYOTA CAMRY LE</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$24,995 44,952 MILES STK: 19P379A KBB: \$25,027</p>	<p>2013 TOYOTA FJ CRUISER 4WD</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$37,995 85,000 MILES STK: 13P359</p>
<p>2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$18,995 8,692 MILES STK: 8HS889 KBB: \$19,496</p>	<p>2016 MAZDA MAZDA6</p>  <p>SALE PRICE \$19,995 52,907 MILES STK: 16P380 KBB: \$20,065</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <p>ONLINE SHOPPER WWW.TRIPLEJSAIPAN.COM</p> <p>CLICK PICK DRIVE</p> <p>GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS IS NOW FASTER AND EASIER!</p>	

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Gregory P. Borja is new NMPASI chief

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Assuming the role on Jan. 6 this year, Gregory P. Borja is Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems Inc.'s new executive director.

Borja, who was NMPASI's program manager before becoming its new chief, said yesterday that his past two weeks at the helm of NMPASI has been "exciting" and "I'm looking forward to continue moving forward with our staff here and the work that we do."

Before Borja became executive director, NMPASI was led by long-time executive director James Rayphand.

According to Borja, Ray-

phand started at NMPASI in 1996 as an advocate, a common starting point for many NMPASI staff. Rayphand worked his way up, became NMPASI's executive director in 2007, and served in the role for the next 15 years. For NMPASI as a whole, Borja said that Rayphand was a great leader. To him, Rayphand was a great mentor.

"[Rayphand] has provided great leadership in [helping us] move forward in terms of ensuring that we hold to our mission of protecting the civil, legal, and human rights of individuals with dis-



Borja

abilities here in the CNMI. He's been a great mentor to me in terms of learning how to work with our federal programs and the grants that we receive in order to ensure that we... don't quit service, even in times of typhoon or with the [ongoing COVID-19] pandemic," said Borja.

"We've always kept our doors open, because the population that we serve is a vulnerable population—people with disabilities—and so we want to ensure that there's no interruption in services for them and what they're trying to get in order to live free in

the community," Borja added.

As for what he would like to see happen at NMPASI with him as director, Borja said he wants to see NMPASI expand its programs, expand its funding opportunities, and see how NMPASI can continue to serve people with disabilities in the midst of a pandemic.

Borja said that NMPASI currently operates through eight federal grants plus one sub-grant from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. that supports NMPASI's efforts to help families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"With the pandemic, there's

a lot of restrictions in terms of access to facilities, so I'd like to see that we are able to continue to get into those facilities to help out people who might need our assistance," he said.

With him at the helm, Borja would also like to see more outreaches in line with the organization's mission to have an accessible community for people with mental or physical disabilities in the CNMI.

"The long-run mission of NMPASI is to ensure that we have an accessible community for people with mental or physical disabilities. ... We want to make sure we get the... appropriate outreach [out there] so that people know some of the issues that

surround the lives of folks with disabilities, because at one time or another, we will all experience a disability. It's a natural part of the human experience," said Borja.

According to its official website, NMPASI's priorities include providing "legally-based advocacy services on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families in the CNMI; advancing 'the understanding of and appreciation for protection & advocacy services and disability-related issues in the CNMI'; and enhancing 'the quality of protection & advocacy services and the efficiency of the organization's operations.'"

DeLeon Guerrero asks BECQ to resolve illegal dump in Marpi

Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) expressed concern Tuesday over an illegal dumping site that had been found in Marpi.

"So sad that a beautiful, peaceful area is being turned into a dumpsite," DeLeon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*.

She said everyone should be concerned about this because if there are chemicals or materials that do not decompose/dissolve and are being

dumped in the area, this may cause groundwater and soil contamination. "Plus it invites pests, disease, and harms our agriculture and wildlife in the area," she added.

"Considering the area being isolated I am sure there are other areas being littered within the same bigger area that's not visible from the road," she said.

DeLeon Guerrero said the Bureau of Environmental and

Coastal Quality has informed her office they will investigate this matter.

Valerie Santos, administrative assistant at the Office of DeLeon Guerrero, attached seven photos of the illegal dumpsite in her email to BECQ yesterday, requesting help in resolving the problem as soon as possible. DeLeon Guerrero said the photos were brought to her attention over the weekend. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

US

From Page 1

the peak of 3,300 in January 2021. COVID-19 deaths among nursing home residents started rising slightly two weeks ago, although still at a rate 10 times less than last year before most residents were vaccinated.

Despite signs omicron causes milder disease on aver-

age, the unprecedented level of infection spreading through the country, with cases still soaring in many states, means many vulnerable people will become severely sick. If the higher end of projections comes to pass, that would push total U.S. deaths from COVID-19 over 1 million by early spring.

"A lot of people are still going to die because of how transmis-

sible omicron has been," said University of South Florida epidemiologist Jason Salemi. "It unfortunately is going to get worse before it gets better."

Morgues are starting to run out of space in Johnson County, Kansas, said Dr. Sanmi Areola, director of the health department. More than 30 residents have died in the county this year, the vast majority of them unvaccinated.

USE

From Page 3

by record vote, then the judge shall pronounce a judgment of conviction against Torres. The judge shall also pronounce in the judgment that Torres is

hereby removed from the Office of Governor.

If no article of impeachment is sustained by the Senate, then a judgment of acquittal shall be pronounced by the judge.

After closing arguments, the Senate sitting as an impeach-

ment tribunal may deliberate in an executive session if authorized by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (six senators) of the Senate members. Final action on the articles of impeachment may not be taken in executive session.

MVA

From Page 1

budget of funding that was already short to begin with.

Alepuyo informed the board that MVA is working on submitting a letter to the Senate expressing their concerns sometime this week or next week.

"At first, they stopped the hotel occupancy taxes from coming to MVA. Now they're stripping us of budget monies that was already short to begin with. That's a grave concern. We're drafting a letter to express our concerns," she said.

The MVA chairwoman noted that the bill would reprogram \$800,000 from MVA's fiscal year 2022 budget to fund the retirees' bonuses.

TWO

From Page 1

The RHC Communicable Disease Investigation/Inspection team has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the newly confirmed cases, and this effort will continue until all probable cases are identified and tested.

Rota has been largely spared

from the COVID-19 pandemic and has not had a positive COVID-19 case until the first week of January this year, when it recorded two new cases.

The RHC news release warned that unvaccinated individuals are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and unvaccinated individuals spread the virus at a higher rate than vaccinated individuals, thereby increasing the

spread and risk of serious illness toward other unvaccinated individuals.

The RHC highly encourages unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated or get a booster shot against COVID-19 to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. For the latest information on vaccine availability or to register for a vaccine, visit www.vaccinatecnmi.com. *(PR)*

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From Page 1

tion Center was notified of two COVID-19-related fatalities that occurred on Jan. 18, 2022.

The territory's 275th COVID-19-related fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Memorial Hospital. The patient was a 70-year-old female, unvaccinated, with underlying health conditions. She tested positive on Jan. 18, 2022.

The 276th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GMH. The patient was a 67-year-old male, vaccinated with underlying health conditions. He tested positive on Jan. 8, 2022.

The JIC statement yesterday had a message from Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero: "Though the fight with COVID-19 has us fatigued, we

must not surrender to this virus which has taken too many of our loved ones too soon. For those who grieve, [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio], and I offer our deepest sympathies and prayers in your time of mourning. With each moment of silence, let us all recommit to the safeguards that have helped us reach this point in the pandemic. Get vaccinated if you haven't done so already. Get boosted if it's your time. And continue to practice the 3 Ws."

As of Jan. 18, 2022, seven individuals in the CNMI are hospitalized as a result of COVID-19. Four of them are unvaccinated, three are vaccinated, and two have been discharged.

On the vaccination front, a total of 158 COVID-19 vaccines were administered on

Jan. 18, 2022, resulting in 98% of the CNMI's eligible population being fully vaccinated.

A total of 704 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Jan. 17, 2022: 570 community-based testing; 75 at the COVID-19 Community Center (referrals only); 39 at Tinian Health Center; and 20 at the Rota Health Center.

CHCC continues to encourage the community to get vaccinated if they have not done so, or get their booster shot if they are eligible to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, or death.

"Please seek care or test early if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, as you may be eligible for monoclonal antibodies or other new treatment that are given soon after infection," CHCC said in its latest news release. *(PR)*

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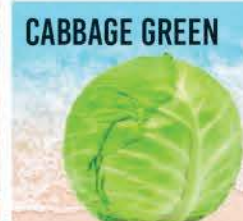
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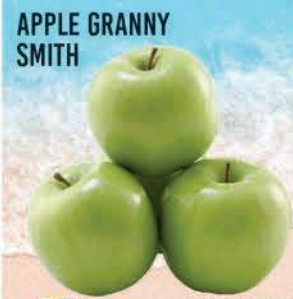
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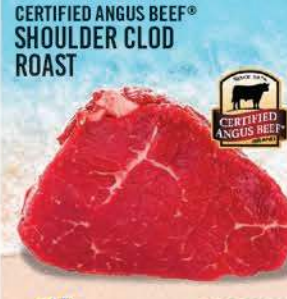
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PAU PAU BEACH 2-INCH WATERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new main waterline and lateral service line; connection to the existing waterline; installation of gate valve assembly, existing lateral service tap relocation; restoration of existing asphalt concrete road; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 13, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-009, Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 2, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel H. Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Mrs. Marcela Tenorio Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Assistant – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

IRP team working on soil testing plan for the Oleai Sports Complex project

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Office of the Governor's Infrastructure and Recovery Program's archaeology team is currently working on a soil testing plan for the \$21.2-million Oleai Sports Complex project.

In the IRP's 2021 annual report forwarded to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday by IRP coordinator Marianne Concepcion-Teregeyo, IRP noted that time is of the essence for this Oleai Sports Complex

project considering that the Pacific Mini Games is starting this June.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration approved last June a \$21.2-million grant to fund the transformation of the Oleai Sports Complex into a modern state-of-the-art sports facility.

IRP said its archaeology team is working with the Public Assistance Office and the



Teregeyo

Historic Preservation Office to streamline the process to begin subsurface soil testing.

The IRP archaeology team has also turned in to HPO for review two research designs for the Department of

Lands and Natural Resources Fishing Base Revetment and the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. Oleai Drainage project.

The archaeologist has been working on six projects

with NMHC, HPO, PAO, and DLNR.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres created the IRP last May to streamline the process and expedite federally funded projects for different government agencies.

The IRP report says its anthropologist spent over 200 hours at the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' HPO to understand HPO's rules and regulations when dealing with infrastructure projects in culturally or historically sensitive areas.

The anthropologist has eight current projects with DLNR, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Department of Public Works, NMHC, Department of Public Land, Public School System, and HPO.

The IPR's Section 106 coordinator has been involved with 10 projects/activities with HPO, CUC, PSS, and other agencies.

IPR says its engineering team is dedicated to planning, designing, and/or overseeing the construction, renovation, and maintenance of infrastructure projects.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Department of Public Works
2nd Floor – Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-9828

PUBLIC NOTICE:
HIGHWAY MASTER PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The CNMI Department of Public Works is updating its 20-Year Highway Master Plan, last revised in 2009. The Highway Master Plan will identify and examine transportation issues related to **mobility, safety, and congestion** on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. This plan document will clearly identify transportation system goals, policies, and needs, as well as the necessary analysis tools over the next 20 years.

We invite you to visit the [Interactive Project Map](#) to leave your comments or attend a workshop event that will be hosted to gather public feedback about the current state of the highways. Three meetings will be held in-person at the following locations and times, as well as virtually via Zoom (see website link below or QR Code):

- **Rota**
 - Mayor's Office
 - Wednesday, January 26, 5:00-7:00 pm
- **Tinian**
 - Tinian High School
 - Wednesday, February 2, 5:00-7:00 pm
- **Saipan**
 - Kagman Community Center
 - Thursday, February 10, 5:00-7:00 pm

SCAN ME

For more information about the Highway Master Plan update, to leave comments, or access the Zoom meetings, visit the project website at <https://qrco.de/bcgggeN> or by scanning the QR code above.

HENRY BAUTISTA
Senior Highway Engineer, Department of Public Works

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-22-009

PAU PAU BEACH 2-INCH WATERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT
ADDENDUM NO. 1
DATED: JANUARY 10, 2022

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is hereby notifying all prospective proposers of the following amendments to CUC-IFB-22-009:

The **Pre-bid Conference/Site Visit** has been rescheduled from 10:00am on January 13, 2022 to **10:00am on January 19, 2022**.

The **deadline for submission of questions or requests for clarification** has been extended from 10:00am on January 17, 2022 to **10:00am on January 21, 2022**.

Bid Submittal Deadline:

The deadline for submission of bids has been extended from 10:00am on February 2, 2022 to **10:00am on February 9, 2022**.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-009, Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 9, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All other terms and conditions in the Scope of Work, shall remain unchanged and in full force.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-22-015

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of heavy equipment for its fleet in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United States Department of the Interior (US DOI), Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-015, Supply and Delivery of Heavy Equipment"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 3, 2022** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 20, 2022**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Yvonne C. Ogumoro, CUC's Acting Water/Wastewater Division Manager via email at yvonne.ogumoro@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Matthew T. Gregory, Esq., F0205
LAW OFFICE OF MATTHEW T. GREGORY, LLC
Suite 603, Marianas Business Plaza
Nauru Loop, Susupe
PMB 419 Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. No. 670-234-9006/5 | Fax No. 670-235-9007
Email: matt@gregoryfirm.com

Attorney for Petitioner Oscar M. Babauta

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE) Civil Action No: 17-0187
MATTER OF)
THE ESTATE OF) **NOTICE OF HEARING**
VICENTE SN)
BABAUTA,) Date: Jan. 27, 2022
Deceased.) Time: 10:00 A.M.
Judge: Honorable Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, AND CREDITORS OF VICENTE SN BABAUTA, DECEASED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Oscar M. Babauta, Executor of the Estate of Vicente SN Babauta, has filed with the Superior Court a Petition for Decree of Final Distribution. The Attorney of Record is the Law Office of Matthew T. Gregory, LLC, Suite 603 Marianas Business Plaza, PMB 419, Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950.

The Petition for Final Decree of Distribution has been set for the 27th day of January, 2022 at 10:00 A.M. at the Superior Court in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear.

Respectfully submitted this 17th day of January, 2022.

PATRICK V. DIAZ
Clerk of Court
By: /s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

COMMUNITY BRIEFS**Power service interruption on Friday**

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Jan. 21, 2022, from 8:30am to 9:30am and 10am to 10:30am, affecting Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers along Beach Road.

Areas affected include Ladera Center building, new Bank of Saipan, First Hawaiian Bank Oleai, Joeten Motors, Joeten Super Store, J's Restaurant, MVA building, and the Microl intersection traffic lights.

This outage will allow CUC

to install conductors overhead primary lines to complete the interconnection of Feeder 2 and Kiya 4 feeder project.

No water well will be affected. The S11 and S12 wastewater facilities will be affected but will be monitored by the generator crew during the outage.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. (PR)

SHRM meeting on Jan. 26

The Society for Human Re-

source Management CNMI Chapter will host a general membership meeting at the Regency Saipan Ballroom on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022, starting at 11:15am. Doors will open at 10:30 AM.

This meeting will feature presentations regarding COVID-19 updates on community-based testing, vaccinations & booster vaccinations, and OSHA law updates.

The presenters are:

■ Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.: public information officer Guillermo Cruz Lifofoi and Heather S. Pangelinan, director of Population Health Services

■ CNMI Department of

Labor - Occupational Safety & Health Administration: Project manager Timothy Asaivao

This meeting will also feature the induction of the 2022 SHRM CNMI board. The oath will be administered by SHRM CNMI Chapter co-founder Josephine Mesta.

This meeting includes lunch. Seats are limited, so reserve your seat by contacting Roman Tudela at roman.tudela@marianas.edu or Denise Montenegro at denise.montenegro@hyatt.com. Pricing is \$25 for SHRM members and \$35 for non-members. (PR)

Guam PTAC offers free

webinar today

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering a free live webinar today, Jan. 20, on SBIR/STTR Programs - Calling all inventors and innovators.

The Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs encourage small businesses to engage in federal research and development that has the potential for commercialization. We will explain the programs and show how you can get involved.

This webinar will run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. A link to the live webinar and

the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

To register visit, www.guamptac.com. (PR)

4.9-magnitude quake near Guam

At 10:49am on Jan. 16, 2022, a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred 15 kilometers northwest of Agat Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. (PR)

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that Procurement Services has been relocated to **Horiguchi Building, Ground Floor, 123 Koppa Di Oru & Beach Road, Garapan Saipan, MP 96950.**

Telephone number:
(670) 664-1500

**NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION****JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2022-004	CDBG-DR Projects Administrative Specialist (1-Position)	UNGRADED \$25,000.00-\$30,000.00 per annum	Jan. 19, 2022	Feb. 03, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhc.gov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670)234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/

JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

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Opinion

Hafa Adail

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Novak Djokovic's coronavirus double fault

Top-ranked tennis star Novak Djokovic finally got his comeuppance for reckless behavior unbecoming of a global sports ambassador. Australia's government deported him, and his exclusion from the Australian Open stalls Djokovic's quest for a record 21 major championship titles. Even if he does ultimately outshine rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on the court, he has ensured he'll forever walk in their shadows as players who recognize their roles as leaders on the world stage and who inspire fans young and old by behaving honorably and responsibly.

Djokovic has no competitors for top ranking in defiant ignorance and selfishness. In June 2020, while the rest of the world remained locked down following a crushing wave of coronavirus deaths, Djokovic organized several exhibition matches that resulted in multiple players, including Djokovic and his pregnant wife, becoming infected with the virus.

Players made no effort to socially distance themselves. They partied mask-free after hours as if pandemic precautions didn't apply to them. Djokovic apologized, but clearly he had learned nothing from the danger to which he exposed his friends, wife and unborn child.

Early last month, Australian Open officials made clear that vaccinations were required for entry into a country that had sacrificed heavily to keep the pandemic at bay, enduring months of lockdowns and achieving a nearly 80% full vaccination rate.

Djokovic made no apparent attempt to protect himself from exposure ahead of the open. On Dec. 14, he attended a professional basketball game and was photographed hugging players who later tested positive. Two days later, Djokovic tested positive. He continued to travel abroad and pose for photos with children and adults. He lied on his Australia visa form about where he had been.

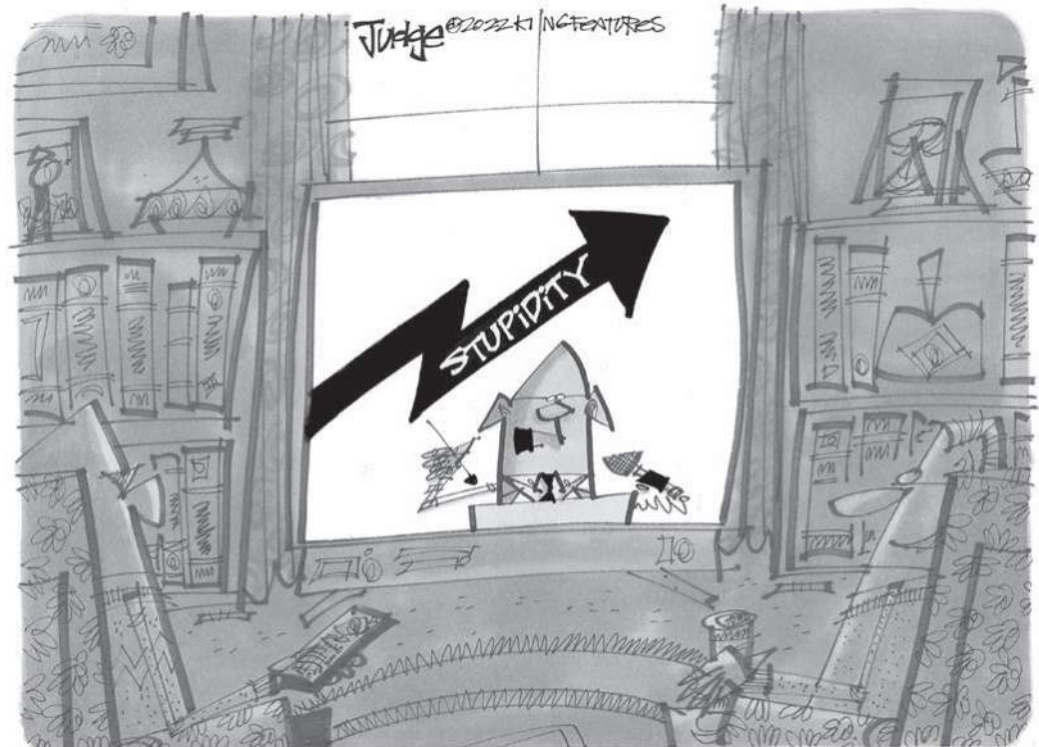
Djokovic now faces a potential three-year ban from Australia and could be blocked from the French Open in May. He has no one to blame but himself.

Djokovic might argue that he is meticulous about everything that could affect his physical performance, and that he doesn't want to risk vaccine side effects. But the facts of his case simply don't bear that argument out. He appears simply not to want to abide by the rules his fellow players follow.

Sadly, he's not alone. Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, top contender for the NFL's most valuable player award, lied about his vaccination status and subsequently tested positive. He missed a single game and was fined. Three Tampa Bay Buccaneers players forged their vaccination documents, receiving three-game suspensions without pay. They were heedless of the danger to which they exposed their own coach, Bruce Arians, after his multiple bouts with cancer, one of which led to the removal of a kidney.

It's time for the sports world—officials, fans and companies that pay top-dollar for product endorsements—to stop giving stars a pass for behaving as if the rules don't apply to them.

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"THE PANDEMIC IS HAVING YET ANOTHER SURGE."

As students rally for stronger school health and safety protocols, 'let the youth speak their truth and let them be heard'

It's fitting that during the time of year we celebrate one of our country's most heralded civil rights icons, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., students across the country are standing up as well—for their right to a safe education.

In walkouts nationwide on Friday, students advocated for safety in schools, as the omicron surge brought coronavirus cases to by far their highest point ever, even as school continues for most in person.

In Seattle on Friday, over 100 students protested outside the Seattle Public Schools headquarters in Sodo, chanting in call and response: "When our safety is under attack, what do we do? Fight back!"

Signs at the rally spoke to the frustration many students expressed about what they felt was the lack of safety in school, with signs reading, "Thousands of cases districtwide. No remote classes. VALUE OUR LIVES," "Is your \$\$\$ worth our safety?" and "How are we supposed to learn if we're sick?"

The past few weeks of school in the Seattle area have brought a dizzying array of school closures, reopenings, sickouts, student strikes and remote learning. The school disruptions have added stress to an already stressful time, as omicron's stunning virulence continues to touch nearly everyone.

Student organizers at Friday's Seattle rally had a list of demands, including more frequent transparency on the number of cases in schools, mental health support for students, redefining what is considered an "instructional day" to include remote learning, and distribution of N95 masks and testing throughout the district.

Mia Dabney and Nya Spivey are two of the youth activists who organized Friday's rally. Both Cleveland High School students, Dabney and Spivey said in interviews last week that with omicron spiking and their school being forced to close several times due to what the district said was "staffing and student attendance projections," more needed to be done to keep students and staff safe.

Senior Dabney, 17, said it wasn't just COVID safety that spurred students into action. Several threats that led to shelter-in-place incidents over several months also affected students' sense of safety at school, along with what she said was a lack of mental health care after the incidents.

"This should not be normal," Dabney said of students facing the fear and anxiety caused by threats at school. "It makes people not want to be at school. Fear is what is controlling so much of the education system," she said, "and that's not what it should be. It should be enlightening people and giving them the excitement of learning, growing and being educated."

Spivey, 18, said it's frustrating and hard to understand why

By **NAOMI ISHISAKA**
The Seattle Times



school was remote last year when there were far fewer COVID cases but is now in person when the cases are at their highest. As a senior, Spivey said she already has enough on her plate with schoolwork, college selection and figuring out her future—all that while "worrying about whether or not going to school is even a safe option."

Spivey also knows the stress of COVID firsthand. After spending hours in the freezing cold and rain to get COVID tests at a district testing site in early January, Spivey said everyone she lives with except her got COVID over the past couple of weeks.

In response to questions about the student demands, a Seattle Public Schools spokesperson said in an email, "Since the pandemic, the district has placed top priority on properly and thoroughly responding to sometimes rapidly evolving conditions, in order to continue to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff. This focus has been done every step of the way in partnership with and guidance from Public Health—Seattle & King County and the Washington Department of Health."

In addition, the district said it requested half a million "enhanced masks" from the state for staff and that student masks "will hopefully be identified and provided soon." They also said they have a "robust" testing program but that weekly testing is not possible without educators being willing to be test observers.

No one doubts it's an unimaginably challenging time for school districts, educators, staff and students. There is no perfect solution. Remote school has tremendous drawbacks, including serious equity concerns. In-person school has tremendous drawbacks, including serious safety concerns.

But one thing we should be able to agree on is that as this crisis continues, those who are closest to the problem—students—know the challenges all too well. They have some of the best solutions, and adults should be listening.

"There's always been student activism," Dabney said. "It's just no one's been listening. We've been fighting, we've always been searching for a place to have our voice be heard. This is our chance for us as youth to step up and be the voice. So let the youth speak their truth and let them be heard."

Two years of the pandemic, and we're still not in the clear. But there's room for optimism

When the nation's second-largest school district reopens for business despite tens of thousands of positive coronavirus tests among students and staff, things have changed.

When the state of California, which led the nation in caution, tells medical staffers who tested positive to go back to work if they're asymptomatic, things have changed.

When you listen to NPR's "On Point" podcast and hear doctors saying that in the midst of the omicron variant surge and hospital fatigue, there are reasons for optimism and that "if you're vaccinated you can start to live your life again," things have changed.

We are two years into a pandemic that has killed roughly 5.5 million people globally and altered life in ways big and small. Last January I wrote a column suggesting there was hope for a turnaround because the best medicine available—vaccine—was being pumped into arms everywhere.

So where do we stand now?

I've been trying to figure that out and would love to give you a definitive answer. But going forward, the virus will give us new looks and we'll have to adapt.

Generally speaking, we're in much better shape than we were two years ago. And better shape than we were a year ago, when getting the vaccine involved a mad scramble to nail down a place in line at a drug store or supermarket.

"I'm very much an optimist," said Dr. Kimberly Shriner, an infectious disease specialist at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena.

But don't take that as an invitation to throw a party and invite everyone you know.

"We have to be very humble in the presence of this virus," Shriner added.

Humility is not something we saw much of from national leaders in the early days of the pandemic. Even now, after more than 800,000 deaths in the U.S., in many quarters the pandemic is politicized and the science scorned.

And we have know-nothing influencers like Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers and tennis star Novak Djokovic broadcasting the message that no one has any responsibility to anyone else.

It's shocking that at this point, we have to keep repeating the obvious.

"Those who are vaccinated and boosted are highly protected against severe disease and death," said Dr. Robert Kim-Farley of the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health.

The vaccine doesn't prevent infection, just as the flu vaccine doesn't necessarily keep you from getting the flu. But you're likely to have an easier time of it.

Another key advance is the rollout of a COVID-19 treatment drug called Paxlovid, which Kim-Farley called a game changer. Used promptly, he said, "there's an 88% reduction in hospitalization and death."

We also now have a rapid antigen test, and "that didn't exist a year ago," Kim-Farley said. But we need far more of them to

help us know whether we're contagious to others.

The L.A. Unified School District's decision to reopen schools led to more than a bit of chaos last week, with 62,000 students and staff out after testing positive. The district reported about 135,000 student absences on Jan. 11.

But Kim-Farley endorsed the decision to reopen.

"We know that children suffer if they're not in the classroom, and remote learning, though better than nothing, is not a very good substitute for being in the classroom," Kim-Farley said. "We also have new tools in our hands for students, including the vaccines we're now able to give them."

If schools everywhere can do more weekly testing and can move quickly to improve ventilation and air filtration systems, Kim-Farley said, the risks will be further minimized.

As for the state telling health care workers who test positive but are asymptomatic to stay on the job, that's not a risk-free option. Much like reopening schools, it's a lesser-of-evils calibration. The omicron surge and rush to hospitals, by patients who are predominantly unvaccinated, have ravaged front-liners.

"We have some infected staff, but have not gotten to the point where we're bringing back people who are infected," said Huntington's Shriner.

Her hospital is busy at the moment, with roughly 100 COVID-19 patients. If it gets to where patient lives are on the line, Shriner said, coronavirus-positive asymptomatic staffers will be called in.

"If you need their expertise to save a life, you bring them back," she said.

She added that if "my own loved one" was such a patient, in need of critical care, she'd want the staffer to "mask up, go in there, and save a life."

I recently got a personal reminder of how frustrating and scary this time can be for anyone with medical problems, including issues that have nothing to do with COVID-19. My daughter needed attention for a rapidly worsening infection and we had to gauge whether it was riskier to go to the ER in the midst of a COVID-19 surge, or wait a day and try to get in to see her regular doctor.

We went to the ER, where she was treated and released with a prescription. Two nights later, with another scare, we thought about returning to the ER, but a staffer said the hospital was swamped.

Going to the ER should be a last resort, and we didn't want to burden critically ill patients or staff. But I'm not going to pretend I wasn't angry on behalf of everyone whose access to care is compromised because the system is overloaded by unvaccinated hordes.

If I let my mind go to the darkest places, I fear that because so much of the world is unvaccinated, we could well see one variant after another circle the globe, and we won't know whether the next one will be the most lethal yet. I worry too about the continued attack on public health protocols and the vilification

By **STEVE LOPEZ**

Los Angeles Times



of experts.

Kim-Farley called the virus "an outside attack on humanity" and he despaired over the ways in which politicized, "aggressive anti-science" messages have crushed an opportunity for the country and the world to unite against the threat. In a healthier atmosphere, he said, we'd be celebrating the fact that a Republican president moved quickly to develop a vaccine and his Democratic successor moved quickly to make it available to everyone.

When I spoke to Shriner, she had just checked on patients in Huntington's "long COVID" clinic.

"Our youngest patient is 26, the oldest are in their 70s," she said, and long COVID—also known as post-acute sequelae of COVID—has been seen in children as well. Her patients have blood clots, inflammation of the brain, heart and lungs. Some have brain fog, some have gotten better and returned to work, some have not.

All the more reason to vaccinate, mask and distance, and to enjoy the freedoms that come with those precautions.

I asked Shriner how often she is asked by friends, family or colleagues for advice on do's and don'ts. Every day, she said, and she tells people to pretend they have 10 risk cards.

"You have to decide whether you want to use one of those cards," she said when I asked if I should eat in the parking lot tent of a restaurant near her hospital.

I told her I can't believe how many times I've watched a ballgame on TV and noticed that most spectators aren't masked. Even at an outdoor game, is that safe?

"If you want to attend a football or baseball game, you have to ask if that's where you want to spend a risk card," Shriner said. "Travel right now is very dangerous, but some people have to do it. If you have a loved one who's in a bad way, you may have to use a card for that."

If she's outdoors walking her dog, Shriner told me, she drops her mask. But if someone comes close, she pulls it back up.

"I don't come from the 'everybody's going to get it school.' I don't want to get it. It doesn't look like fun," Shriner said. "I'm not going to be locked up, but I'm going to be sensible. ... I think we can be hopeful because we've conquered all kinds of obstacles in the past. This is just going to take time, patience, equity and selflessness."

So maybe you can breathe a little easier than you could at the start of 2020 or 2021.

But don't let your guard down yet.

What Martin Luther King taught me about 'good hair' and Black pride

Every January, as I read and listen to the tributes to Martin Luther King Jr., I think not only about what Dr. King gave the world, but also about what he gave me personally.

On his 1963 visit to Cleveland, Dr. King spoke from the back of a flatbed truck at a park not far from our neighborhood. My mother, who'd grown up in Alabama during the reign of Jim Crow, took me, then 9 years old, with her to see her hero.

She made sure to arrive early enough to claim a space near the front of the crowd. And when Dr. King leaned down to shake hands, my mother lifted me up and thrust me forward, thrilled to see the civil rights icon clasping her daughter's small, outstretched hand. My mother was rapturous. I was too young to understand the hullabaloo, but I felt for a moment as if I had encountered a deity.

Honestly, I don't remember much of what Dr. King said. His lilting cadence captivated me, but I was too young and ignorant of history then for the full measure of his message to sink in.

But there was one line he spoke that stopped me in my tracks; a rousing declaration that's unlikely to show up in the holiday tributes, but that still speaks volumes to me:

"I don't care what anyone says, I have good hair!"

His delivery was emphatic, and the crowd roared with laughter. I stood there totally confused, studying his head. His close-cropped hair looked to me like a patch of tightly coiled black

beads, shiny with sweat.

I thought I knew what "good hair" meant. It was a comment often directed my way, as in "You're so lucky to have good hair." But his hair was nothing like mine.

"Good hair" in our vernacular then meant it didn't require a hot comb. My curls were frizzy, and I mostly hated them, as many young Black girls did back in the day, but they were loose enough that I could wear my hair in ponytails that bounced. This was something other Black folks seemed to care about.

Still, I understood even then the implications of the "good hair" label. It accepted "white hair" as the standard by which all hair should be judged. The closer to white your facial features, skin color and hair texture were judged to be, the higher you were in the Negro hierarchy.

Yet here was this dark-skinned, kinky-haired man insisting that his hair was "good." Was my hair still good? Was it going to wind up like his one day? I was curious about what he meant, but more than that, I was stirred by his boldness, his self-respect.

As I tuned in to his speech, a curtain in my mind began to lift. He talked about justice and sacrifice; about the resilience of our people and the dignity of our demands; about our connection to one another.

His hair began to look beautiful to me. And so did all the hair of the hundreds of people surrounding us.

By **SANDY BANKS**

Los Angeles Times



I realized Dr. King was not commenting on the quality or texture of his hair. His hair was good because it was HIS hair; it was a Black man's hair, and its worth didn't rest on some arbitrary standard dictated by people who didn't value him.

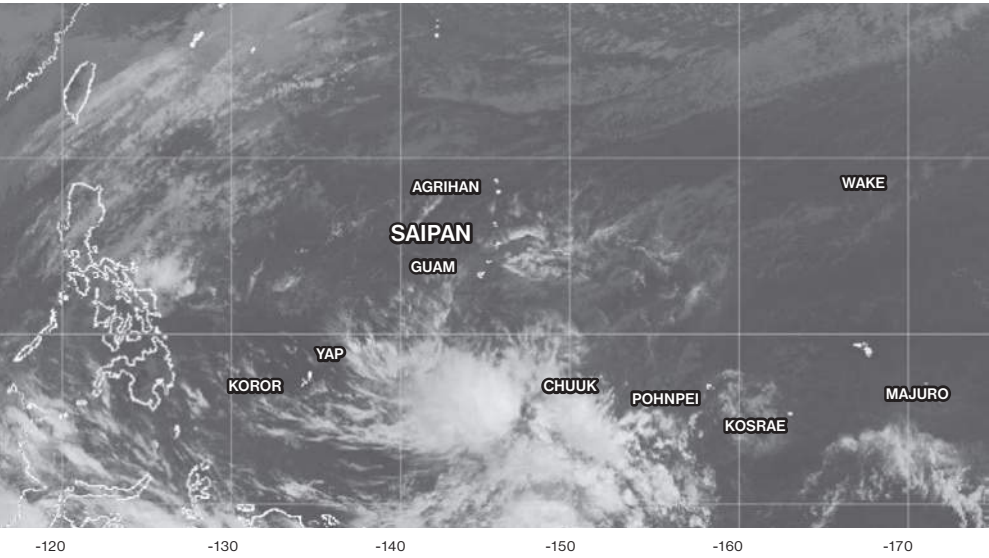
That was when it dawned on me that I was part of something bigger than my family. I was connected to all these people by a history that both shaped our strengths and seeded our physical differences.

It may seem like a small thing now, but his declaration was revolutionary to me then—in an era when calling someone Black was an insult. We had all been socialized to value straight hair and light skin.

It would be years before "Black" ceased to be offensive and became our chosen descriptor; a signifier of unity. And, in my life, that will always be a part of Dr. King's legacy.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
76°	85°	76°	85°	75°	85°	76°	85°	76°	85°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:32 AM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Andersen Air Force Base Doppler weather radar shows a shear line just south of Guam with scattered showers covering Guam and Rota. Satellite shows the shear line weakening and becoming thinner, but it still extends east-northeastward all the way to Ni`ihau in the far northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The Ipan buoy reveals combined seas of 5 to 7 feet composed mainly of an east-northeast swell and an east- southeast swell. There`s also a north swell of 3 to 4 feet that will raise open ocean combined seas by 1 additional foot.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	28 / 24 °F
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Yap	Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	30 / 27°F
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	29 / 27 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	05:47 AM	18:39 PM
Frrday	05:47 AM	18:40 PM
Saturday	05:46 AM	18:40 PM
Sunday	05:46 AM	18:40 PM
Monday	05:46 AM	18:41 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	06:45 PM	19:59 PM
Frrday	-	07:35 PM	20:54 PM
Saturday	-	08:27 PM	21:47 PM
Sunday	-	09:19 AM	22:37 PM
Monday	-	10:11 PM	23:23 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 17, 2022

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1,3,5,7	PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2,4,6,7
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
				TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3452	2:00PM	5:20PM	2	7C3451	8:00AM	1:00PM	3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

CBP gets ESGR's '2021 Most Supportive Employer' award

By JOSHUA SANTOS

joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the CNMI received the "2021 Most Supportive Employer" award Tuesday from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, in honor of CBP's "exemplary support of National Guard and Reserve member employees."

ESGR CNMI Area Committee chair Dr. Rita Sablan and ESGR CNMI area chair emeritus in charge of employer outreach Rose Igitol visited the CBP office at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport Tuesday to present the award to Port Director for the CNMI and Tinian son Jeffrey M. Hofschneider.

CBP officer and staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve Tanya Songsong-Diaz nominated her employer, CBP, for the award.

Songsong-Diaz said she nominated Hofschneider and CBP for the award for being supportive of the demands that come with being a reservist. She said there have been many times where she had to leave on short notice, and CBP has continued to accommodate her.

"Since the beginning of my career, my employer has always been supportive of



JOSHUA SANTOS

Officers of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection share a photo after CBP was given the "2021 Most Supportive Employer" award by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve yesterday. CBP officer and staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve Tanya Songsong-Diaz nominated her employer for the award. Holding the award is Port Director for the CNMI Jeffrey M. Hofschneider.

me. There were numerous times that I've had to leave on short notice, and [CBP has] never had any issues with that; they've always been supportive [of] all my military missions that come up at the last moment," said Songsong-Diaz.

Songsong-Diaz has been working at CBP since 2018, and has been a reservist for about 23 years now. Songsong-Diaz added that there are three other reservists working

at CBP: one is part of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, one part of the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and one is part of the U.S. Army Reserve.

Hofschneider said he and CBP have been nominated and awarded the ESGR "Patriotic Employer" award before, and this additional ESGR award "speaks volumes" of how his employees who are also reservists think of him.

"I am honored to receive this award, and the fact that

my employees feel that I'm deserving of this award in itself is an award to me," said Hofschneider.

Sablan shared with *Saipan Tribune* that CBP and Hofschneider were supposed to receive the award during an "Employer Awards Ceremony" in Guam last year, but the event was cancelled for COVID-19 safety reasons.

Songsong re-appointment to Cannabis Commission board confirmed

The Rota Legislative Delegation confirmed Friday the re-appointment of Thomas L. Songsong to serve as a member of the CNMI Cannabis Commission board, representing Rota.

At the RLD's session held in the Rota Mayor's conference room, the delegation received oral and written testimonies in favor of Songsong's confirmation. The CCC board chair and director also elaborated on the reasons why Songsong should be re-appointed.

RLD co-chairperson Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) said Songsong's decision on policy deliberations, active participation, and involvement in the commission are highly commendable.

Santos said Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig and some other citizens emphasized the importance of continuity and recognized the need for Songsong's close working relationship with the rest of the CCC board, thus moving forward the industry with its goals and objectives. Santos said that Songsong was asked to provide newsletters or reports to Rota's leaders "so we are informed and/or perhaps we can make recommendations."

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation

recently confirmed the re-appointment of Valentino N. Taisacan Jr. to serve as a member of the CNMI Cannabis Commission board, representing

the Northern Islands.

Nadine C. Deleon Guerrero, who is representing Saipan, is currently the commission's chair. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP22-CHCC/CGC-NASMPD/TTI 988-009

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 4, 2022 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"PROFESSIONAL SERVICES"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB22-DPL-42200036

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 14, 2022 TIME: 9:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LAND, SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT HORGUCHI BLDG., GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ SIXTO K. IGISOMAR
SECRETARY OF DPL

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
DIRECTOR, P.S.



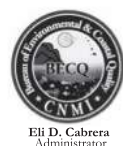
A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) ACCOUNTANT

For more information, job description and an application visit the Karidat main office at Sister Remedios Community Center, Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A completed application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

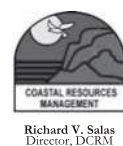
NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, February 11, 2022 AT 4:00 PM



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp



Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 2:30PM** at the BECQ 2nd Floor Conference Room, in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j> (Meeting ID: 6706648315) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance and most updated information as Zoom meeting access code may change.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of July 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

II. PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW

- CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2001-X-213-A1 Project: KOBLERVILLE HOMESTEAD EXPANSION PROJECT
Applicant: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS
The Department of Public Lands (DPL) is proposing to increase the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision to 330. The project is situated on Lot No. 048 I 01, measuring approximately 62 acres of public land.
 - Agencies' Discussion
 - Agencies' Final Determination

- CRM Permit Application No. TMS-97-X-294-A1
Project: TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PARKING LOT EXPANSION
Applicant: COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

- The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is proposing to expand the public parking facility at the Tinian International Airport by adding 55 parking stalls including other improvements to the existing parking lot area. The project site is situated on Lot No. T72 T -01/02 measuring an area of about 65,056 square feet.*
- Agencies' Discussion
 - Agencies' Final Determination

III. OTHER MATTERS

- Proposed revisions to DCRM permitting fee regulations
- Proposed revisions to regulation governing hearings and meetings to allow remote participation
- Authorization of DCRM Director to publish proposed regulations in the Commonwealth Register

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Business

White House soft-launches its COVID-19 test request website

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration on Tuesday quietly launched its website for Americans to request free at-home COVID-19 tests, a day before the site was scheduled to officially go online.

The website, COVIDTests.gov, now includes a link for “every home in the U.S.” to access an order form run by the U.S. Postal Service. People can order four at-home tests per residential address, to be delivered by the Postal Service. It marks the latest step by President Joe Biden to address criticism of low inventory and long lines for testing during a nationwide surge in COVID-19 cases due to the omicron variant.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the website was in “beta testing” and operating at a “limited capacity” ahead of its official launch. The website will officially launch midmorning Wednesday, Psaki said.

There were isolated reports Tuesday afternoon of problems relating to the website’s address verification tool erroneously enforcing the four-per-household cap on apartment buildings and other multi-unit dwellings. A spokesperson for the Postal Service said in a statement that the error was “occurring in a small percentage of orders.” He said any user needing assistance could file a service request at email.usps.com/s/the-postal-store-inquiry or contact a help desk at 1-800-ASK-USPS.

At points Tuesday more than 750,000 people were accessing the website at the same time, according to public government tracking data, but it was not immediately known how many orders were placed.

Psaki added that the administration was anticipating a “bug or two,” but had IT experts from across the government working to get the site ready.

Biden announced last month



Youngstown City Health Department worker Faith Terreri grabs two at-home COVID-19 test kits to be handed out during a distribution event, Dec. 30, 2021, in Youngstown, Ohio.

that the U.S. would purchase 500 million at-home tests to launch the program and on Thursday the president announced that he was doubling the order to 1 billion tests.

But Americans shouldn’t expect a rapid turnaround on the orders and they will have to plan ahead and request the tests well before they meet federal guidelines for when to use a test.

The White House said “tests will typically ship within 7-12 days of ordering” through USPS, which reports shipping times of 1-3 days for its first-class package service in the continental United States.

Officials emphasized that the federal website is just one way for people to procure COVID-19 tests, and shortages of at-home test kits have shown signs of easing as more supply has hit the market.

Since Saturday, private insurance companies have been required to cover the cost of at-home rapid tests, allowing Americans to be reimbursed for tests they purchased at pharmacies and online retailers. That covers up to eight tests per month.

The technical bugs that embarrassed President Barack Obama’s administration with the 2013 rollout of the HealthCare.gov website should not be a problem for the COVID-19 test kit website in part

because it is so much simpler, said Alex Howard, director of the Digital Democracy Project, an open government watchdog group. Howard said the new website is also simpler than the Vaccines.gov website—for finding nearby vaccine clinics and pharmacies—that was already successfully launched by the Biden administration last year.

Howard said the task of requesting someone’s address is a straightforward one, especially when compared with the Obama-era health insurance website that involved shopping for different health plans and authenticating a secure transaction. The challenge of hosting a website application under high demand is also a “solved problem” in the private sector, he said.

“My expectation is the U.S. Digital Service and any vendors they work with will be able to pull this off,” he said. “It’s the least hard part of this.”

Two tech companies that frequently work with the federal government—Microsoft and Accenture—on Tuesday referred questions about the website to the Postal Service. Amazon, a major cloud provider for U.S. agencies, didn’t respond to requests for comment.

Howard said the trickiest part of the project is not the website but the physical distribution of kits.

President Joe Biden said the decision by AT&T and Verizon “will avoid potentially devastating disruptions to passenger travel, cargo operations, and our economic recovery, while allowing more than 90% of wireless tower deployment to occur as scheduled.” He said the administration will keep working on a permanent solution. (AP)

ment between the telecoms and airlines over a rollout of new 5G service.

The companies said they will launch 5G or fifth-generation service Wednesday, but they will delay turning on 5G cell towers within a 2-mile radius of runways designated by federal officials. They did not say how long they would keep those towers idle.

AT&T, Verizon pause 5G after airlines raise alarm

AT&T and Verizon will delay launching new wireless service near key airports after the nation’s largest airlines said the service would interfere with aircraft technology and cause widespread flight disruptions.

The decision from the companies came Tuesday as the Biden administration intervened to broker a settle-

Nation

3 police officers charged in shooting death of 8-year-old

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Three police officers have been charged with manslaughter and reckless endangerment after firing their weapons in the direction of a crowd of people exiting a high school football game outside of Philadelphia, killing an 8-year-old girl and injuring three people.

A grand jury recommended the charges against the three Sharon Hill Police officers—Devon Smith, Sean Dolan and Brian Devaney—in the Aug. 27 shooting that killed Fanta Bility. Murder charges previously filed against two Black teenagers for firing the gunshots that prompted the officers to shoot were also dropped Tuesday, according to a news release from the Delaware County District Attorney’s office.

Each officer was charged with 10 counts of reckless endangerment and one count of manslaughter and involuntary manslaughter, according to the charging documents.

According to court records, all three men had their preliminary arraignments Tuesday morning and each was released on unsecured \$500,000 bail. A message left with law firm McMon-



Protesters call for police accountability in the death of 8-year-old Fanta Bility who was shot outside a football game, at the Delaware County Courthouse in Media, Pa., Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022.

gle, Perri, McHugh, Mischak & Davis, which is representing all three men, was not immediately returned Tuesday.

Investigators say Angelo “AJ” Ford, 16, got into an argument with Hasein Strand, 19, and exchanged gunfire outside of the Aug. 27 football game in Sharon Hill, a small borough just north of the Philadelphia International Airport. That gunfire included two gunshots in the direction of the three officers, who were monitoring the crowd as it left the game, authorities said.

The officers returned that gunfire, firing their weapons toward a car they believed was involved in the initial

gunfire, striking the car and members of the crowd of people leaving the game. Investigators later determined that the women in the car were not responsible for the initial gunfire.

Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer had previously said there was a high probability that Bility and three of four others who were injured by gunfire had been struck by police. He said Tuesday that investigators are now certain they were struck by police gunfire.

Delaware County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 27 President Joseph Fitzgerald issued a statement supporting the officers.

ACROSS THE NATION

Sheriff: 3 teens found dead in home outside of Houston

HOUSTON (AP)—Three teens were found dead Tuesday in a home northeast of Houston, and it appears one of the teens killed himself after killing the other two, authorities said. Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said at a news conference that the bodies were found Tuesday afternoon by “a family member” who lives next door and “was trying to locate someone.” The home is in a rural area near the community of Crosby, which is about 25 miles (40.23 kilometers) northeast of Houston. He said two females and one male were dead. He did not have their ages. Gonzalez said the firearm that appears to have been involved was found at the scene. He said the homeowner is believed to have been away. He said they were still trying to determine a motive and the connections between the three teens.

White House: Texas hostage-taker had raised no red flags

DALLAS (AP)—The gunman who took four people hostage at a Texas synagogue in a 10-hour standoff that ended in his death was checked against law enforcement databases before entering the U.S. but raised no red flags, the White House said Tuesday. Malik Faisal Akram, a 44-year-old British citizen, arrived in the U.S. at Kennedy Airport in New York on a tourist visa about two weeks

ago, officials said. He spent time in Dallas-area homeless shelters before the attack Saturday in the suburb of Colleyville. Akram was not believed to be included in the Terrorist Screening Database, a listing of known or suspected terrorists maintained by the FBI and shared with a variety of federal agencies, two law enforcement officials told The Associated Press. Had he been included, it would have been extremely difficult for him to get into the country.

Texas wildfire forces evacuations; planned burn may be cause

A wildfire in a Central Texas state park forced the evacuation of dozens of homes Tuesday in the city of Bastrop—the site of a deadly blaze more than a decade ago—and officials said a prescribed burn may be to blame. The fire started in Bastrop State Park as wind gusts of up to 20 mph (32 kph) spread the flames. Bastrop County Judge Paul Pape—the county’s top elected official—said in a press conference Tuesday night that about 640 acres (249 hectares) have burned. About 150 acres (61 hectares) were scheduled to be burned. About 250 families have been asked to evacuate as a precaution, Pape said. Reverse 911 calls were made to residents who should evacuate, Pape said, but he pleaded with people to contact their neighbors who may have missed the calls. No injuries or deaths have been reported. (AP)

Asia

UN: Afghan quake death toll reaches 26, including children

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

—The United Nations on Tuesday raised the death toll from twin earthquakes in western Afghanistan the day before to 26, saying three villages of around 800 houses were flattened by the temblors.

At least four people were injured and the dead included women and children, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Villagers in the area were still searching on Tuesday for their family members and removing items stuck under the mud.

According to the U.N. statement, hundreds of mud-brick houses that were destroyed were already vulnerable due

to heavy heavy rains in the country. Many survivors spent the night sheltering at their relatives' houses while others stayed among the ruins of their homes.

The U.S. Geological Survey on Monday registered a magnitude 5.3 quake at 2 p.m. and a second, magnitude 4.9 at 4 p.m. local time. They struck 41 kilometers (25 miles) east and 50 kilometers (31 miles) southeast of Qala-e-Naw, the provincial capital in Badghis. The province lies along the border with Turkmenistan and is one of Afghanistan's most underdeveloped and impoverished regions.

The quakes were felt across three western provinces—

Badghis, Ghor, and Herat, the U.N. statement said.

"People whose homes have been damaged or destroyed are being hosted by their relatives and other members of their communities," the U.N. said. "Preliminary reports indicate that food, shelter, and non-food items, and heating materials are most urgently needed."

The Taliban, who overran the country in mid-August, called on international aid organizations to provide immediate help, including tents and other basic necessities, for the victims. The Taliban put the death toll at 22; the disparity in the figures could not immediately be reconciled.

HK to kill 2K animals after hamsters get COVID-19

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong

Kong authorities said Tuesday that they will kill about 2,000 small animals, including hamsters, after several tested positive for the coronavirus at a pet store where an employee was also infected.

The city will also stop the sale of hamsters and the import of small mammals, according to officials from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. The pet shop employee tested positive for the delta variant on Monday, and several hamsters imported from the Netherlands at the store tested positive as well.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, animals do not appear to play a significant role in spreading the coronavirus. But Hong Kong authorities said they are not ruling out transmission between animals

and humans.

"We cannot exclude the possibility that the shopkeeper was in fact actually infected from the hamsters," said Edwin Tsui, a controller at the Centre for Health Protection.

While this coronavirus most likely jumped from animals to humans in the first place, the outbreak became a pandemic because the virus spreads so easily between people. Minks are the only known animals to have caught the virus from people and spread it back, according to Dr. Scott Weese at Ontario Veterinary College.

Leung Siu-fai, director of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, said during a news conference that owners should keep hamsters at home, and not take them out. "All pet owners should observe good personal hygiene, and after you have been in

contact with animals and their food, you should wash your hands," he said.

"Do not kiss your pets," he added.

Customers who purchased hamsters from the store after Jan. 7 will be traced and be subject to mandatory quarantine and must hand over their hamsters to authorities to be put down, officials said.

They said all pet stores in Hong Kong must stop selling hamsters and that about 2,000 small mammals, including hamsters and chinchillas, will be killed in a humane manner.

Customers who bought hamsters in Hong Kong from Dec. 22 will be subject to mandatory testing and are urged not contact others until their tests have returned negative. If their hamsters test positive, they will be subject to quarantine.

China's births fall in 2021, as workforce shrinks

BEIJING (AP)—The number of babies born in China fell again last year, official data showed Monday, adding to pressure on the ruling Communist Party's ambitions to boost national wealth and influence with a workforce that has been shrinking for a decade.

Some 10.6 million babies were born, the government said, down 12% from the 12 million reported earlier for 2020.

The total population stood at 1.413 billion at the end of 2021, an increase of 480,000 from the previous year, the National Bureau of Statistics reported.

The decline in birth rates could undercut the ruling

party's plans to develop technology and self-sustaining economic growth based on consumer spending rather than exports and investment.

The fall in population growth has prompted warnings China, where economic output per person is below the global average, might face a "demographic time bomb" and have too few workers to support a growing number of elderly people.

The ruling party has enforced birth limits since 1980 to restrain population growth and conserve resources. But leaders started to worry after the working-age population peaked at 925 million in 2011 and started to drop earlier than expected.

Authorities eased birth limits starting in 2015. But couples are put off by high costs, cramped housing and job discrimination against mothers.

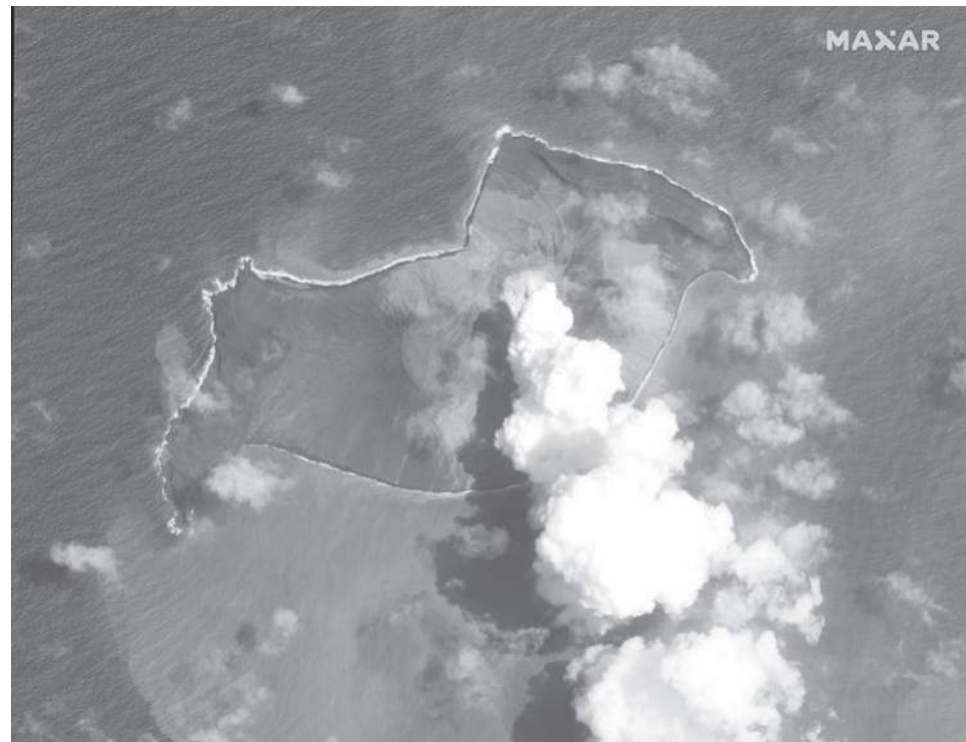
The percentage of people aged 16 to 59, the official working age population, edged down to 882.2 million, or 62.5% of the total, from 63.3% reported in the 2020 census. That is down from 70.1% a decade ago.

Demographers say the working-age share of the population might fall to half by 2050.

There were 267 million people aged 60 and above, or 18.9% of the total, up from 264 million, or 18.7%, in 2020.

World

DESPITE HUGE VOLCANO BLAST Tonga avoids wider disaster



This satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies shows an overview of Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano in Tonga on Jan. 6, 2022, before a huge undersea volcanic eruption. AP

WELLINGTON, New

Zealand (AP)—The blast from the volcano could be heard in Alaska, and the waves crossed the ocean to cause an oil spill and two drownings in Peru. The startling satellite images resembled a massive nuclear explosion.

And yet, despite sitting almost on top of the volcano that erupted so violently on Saturday, the Pacific nation of Tonga appears to have avoided the widespread devastation that many initially feared.

In its first update since the eruption, the government said Tuesday it has confirmed three deaths—two local residents and a British woman. Concerns remain over the fate of people on some of the hard-hit smaller islands, where many houses were destroyed. Communications have been down everywhere, making assessments more difficult.

But on Tonga's main island of Tongatapu, perhaps the biggest problem is the ash that has transformed it into a gray moonscape, contaminating the rainwater that people rely on to drink. New Zealand's military is sending fresh water and other much-needed supplies, but said Tuesday the ash covering Tonga's main runway will delay the flight at least another day.

On Tongatapu, at least, life is slowly returning to normal. The tsunami that swept over coastal areas after the

eruption was frightening for many but rose only about 80 centimeters (2.7 feet), allowing most to escape.

"We did hold grave fears, given the magnitude of what we saw in that unprecedented blast," said Katie Greenwood, the head of delegation in the Pacific for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Fortunately, in those major population centers we are not seeing the catastrophic effect we thought might happen, and that's very good news."

Greenwood, who is based in Fiji and has been talking with people in Tonga by satellite phone, said an estimated 50 homes were destroyed on Tongatapu but that nobody needed to use emergency shelters. She said about 90 people on the nearby island of 'Eua were using shelters.

U.N. humanitarian officials and Tonga's government reported significant infrastructural damage around Tongatapu and concerns about the lack of contact from some of the low-lying islands. The Geneva-based U.N. World Health Organization reported that many people remained unaccounted for.

New Zealand's High Commission in Tonga also reported significant damage along the western coast of Tongatapu, including to resorts and the waterfront area.

Tonga's government said all the homes on Mango island—where about 36 people live—were destroyed and

only two houses remained standing on Fonoifua island, home to about 69 people.

The government described the event as an "unprecedented disaster" and said tsunami waves had risen as high as 15 meters (49 feet) in places.

Like other island nations in the Pacific, Tonga is regularly exposed to the extremes of nature, whether it be cyclones or earthquakes, making people more resilient to the challenges they bring.

Indeed, Greenwood said Tonga does not want an influx of aid workers following the eruption. Tonga is one of the few remaining places in the world that has managed to avoid any outbreaks of the coronavirus, and officials fear that if outsiders bring in the virus it could create a much bigger disaster than the one they're already facing.

Another worry, said Greenwood, is that the volcano could erupt again. She said there is currently no working equipment around it which could help predict such an event.

Satellite images captured the spectacular eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano on Saturday, with a plume of ash, steam and gas rising like a giant mushroom above the South Pacific. The volcano is located about 64 kilometers (40 miles) north of Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa.

Two people drowned in Peru, which also reported the oil spill after waves moved a ship that was transferring oil at a refinery.

Environment

Official says Japan hopes to lead Asian zero-emissions push

TOKYO (AP)—Japan will gradually phase out coal plants over the next two decades while developing new technologies to reduce, capture and utilize carbon, Environment Minister Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi said Tuesday.

Yamaguchi said in an interview with The Associated Press that Japan hopes to lead a zero-emissions push in Asia and is preparing to introduce a carbon tax to meet its commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, creating stronger incentives to curb emissions.

“We cannot give details about what we will do with coal fired plants by 2030, but we will do our best to minimize emissions,” Yamaguchi said.

Current efforts in Japan, the world’s third-largest economy,

are focused on developing methods to burn ammonia in conventional coal-fired plants and gradually phasing out use of coal possibly sometime in the 2040s.

Environmental groups and critics are urging Japan to focus more on promoting renewable energy, saying current policies will just prolong use of coal and hinder reductions in carbon emissions.

Critics also have accused Japan of promoting coal-fired plants in the past as part of its development assistance for many Asian countries.

Yamaguchi said Japan will speed up development of carbon capture, use and storage, or CCUS, technology as part of its support for other Asian nations.

Japan has been seen as re-

luctant to commit itself to banning coal power as soon as many European countries. At the COP-26 United Nations climate summit held in Glasgow, Scotland, late last year, it was awarded the Fossil of the Day award by an environmental organization for its stance.

Japan relied more heavily on nuclear power before the 2011 triple disasters of earthquake, tsunami and meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, which led it to idle many reactors. Some were restarted after safety upgrades, but the country still uses more gas and coal than before to fuel its economy.

Energy experts and critics say Japan currently has overly ambitious targets for nuclear energy to supply 20-22% of its

energy mix by 2030. By that time, the country has promised to cut emissions to 46% of 2013 levels.

Japan last year emitted about 1.15 billion tons of greenhouse gas, down 5.1% from the previous year and 18.4% below the 2013 level, according to the latest government data.

At the Glasgow summit, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pledged to support cutbacks in carbon emissions by promoting use of ammonia, hydrogen and other innovative decarbonizing technologies. He did not say when Japan will end coal fired power generation.

While Japan is seen as dragging its feet in giving up coal, Yamaguchi said Tokyo should get credit for contributing to an agreement on market

mechanisms—a deal that supports the transfer of emission cuts between countries while also giving incentives to companies to invest in climate-friendly solutions.

Yamaguchi said a carbon tax would help Japan contribute to other countries’ emissions cutting efforts under an “Asia zero-emissions community” vision announced Monday by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Yamaguchi did not provide any specific details about the carbon tax or when it might be enacted. Carbon pricing measures under consideration include introduction of carbon taxes for companies and households, as well as emissions trading. The government has not announced a decision

on the issue.

Kishida on Tuesday kicked off a government-commissioned “clean energy strategy” panel of experts and officials, asking its members to study carbon pricing and provide a plan by the summer.

The environment minister, a former diplomat who earned a doctoral degree in politics at Johns Hopkins University, said he is considering launching a framework for talks with 17 other nations on a joint carbon crediting mechanism to eventually cut emissions to zero, starting with phasing out coal-fired power plants.

Ideally, the forum would include all Asian-Pacific countries, Yamaguchi said.

“Environmental issues are borderless,” he said.

By **JOSEPH OSTAPIUK**
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, N.Y.

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.—The last seven years have been the warmest on record, with 2021 ranking fifth among those 12-month spans amid a continued increase of greenhouse gas emissions that scientists warn could eventually propel the planet to suffering irreversible damage.

A yearly analysis by the Copernicus Climate Change Service, a European Union program, was made available Monday and found the mean global temperature was between 1.1 to 1.2 degrees Celsius—about 2 to 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit—higher in 2021 compared to pre-industrial levels.

Scientists have noted that an average temperature increase surpassing 1.5 degrees Celsius could cause permanent damage to the planet and have a wide range of detrimental environmental impacts. Even currently baked-in levels of warming are already contributing to significant weather events across the globe, including a heat wave that baked the Pacific coast earlier last year.

“2021 was yet another year of extreme temperatures with the hottest summer in Europe, heatwaves in the Mediterranean, not to mention the unprecedented high temperatures in North America,” said Carlo Buontempo, director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

The insidious trend, researchers said, should serve as a warning to combatting the catalysts of warming temperatures.

“The last seven years have been the seven warmest on record,” added Buontempo. “These events are a stark reminder of the need to change our ways, take decisive and effective steps toward a sustainable society and work towards reducing net carbon emissions.”

The analysis showed that numerous regions in North America experienced significant temperature anomalies in 2021, including in Northeast Canada, where temperatures were atypically warm both in the beginning of the year and during the fall. Elsewhere, the aforementioned heatwave caused June to be the warmest on record for North America.

In Europe, researchers observed devastating floods fueled by heavy rainfall, while areas like Sicily, in Italy, preliminarily experienced the hottest temperatures in recorded European history.

Copernicus Climate Change Service records date back to 1950; however, it also aggregates data spanning back further, the New York Times reported.

Preliminary satellite data, meanwhile, showed carbon dioxide emissions—which come from a range of sources

including the burning of fossil fuels—continued a steadily rising trend, though the rate increase was slightly less than recent years, the scientists said. Those emissions were bolstered by around 1,850 megatonnes of carbon released by wildfires that occurred globally in 2021.

Levels of methane, the second-most prevalent greenhouse gas, also grew considerably in 2021, the report found. Methane growth rates of the last two years are significantly higher than rates from the past two decades, though scientists are still searching to understand the cause of that rise.

“Carbon dioxide and methane concentrations are continuing to increase year on year and without signs of slowing down. These greenhouse gases are the main drivers of climate change,” said Vincent-Henri Peuch, director of the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service. “Only with determined efforts backed up by observational evidence can we make a real difference in our fight against the climate catastrophe.”

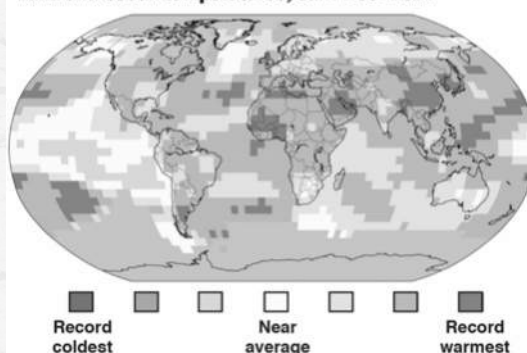
Recent studies found flooding exacerbated by climate change will cost billions in damage on a yearly basis moving forward. While all weather events cannot be directly linked to climate change, scientists have been recently able to better identify the impact of human-caused global warming.

The most recent weather catastrophes came as the United Nations global climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, concluded. The meeting among world leaders was considered by some to come up short of the ambitious steps needed to meet the urgency of combatting climate change.

6th warmest year on record

The year was characterized by much-warmer-than-average 2021 temperatures across much of the globe, with record-high annual temperatures across parts of northern Africa, southern Asia, southern South America, as well as across parts of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Land and ocean temperatures, Jan.-Dec. 2021



Source: NOAA
Graphic: Staff, TNS

2021 was Earth's
**fifth
hottest
year;**
last seven years
the warmest on
record

Life & Style

Rome villa with Caravaggio fails to sell, to be reauctioned

ROME (AP)—A villa in Rome containing the only known ceiling painted by Caravaggio went on a court-ordered auction block Tuesday, thanks to an inheritance dispute pitting the

heirs of one of Rome's aristocratic families against their stepmother, a Texas-born princess.

Princess Rita Jenrett Boncompagni Ludovisi, formerly known as Rita Carpenter,

woke up Tuesday in the Casino dell'Aurora surrounded by her dogs on what might have been the last day that her home of nearly two decades was actually hers.

An online auction organized by the Rome tribunal began at 3 p.m. and closed a short time later without a winner. The starting bid had been set at 353 million euros (\$400 million),

and the villa just off the famous Via Veneto was assigned a court-appraised value of 471 million euros (\$533 million).

With no winning bids in the first round, the villa will go up

for auction two more times at lower prices, and the Italian Culture Ministry can try to match the highest bid at any stage. The next round is scheduled for April 7.

Microsoft buys game maker Activision Blizzard for about \$70B

Microsoft is paying the enormous sum of nearly \$70 billion for Activision Blizzard, the maker of Candy Crush and Call of Duty, a deal that would immediately make it a larger video-game company than Nintendo while raising questions about the deal's possible anti-competitive effects.

The all-cash \$68.7 billion deal will turn Microsoft, maker of the Xbox gaming system, into one of the world's largest video game companies. It will also help it compete with tech rivals such as Meta, formerly Facebook, in creating im-

mersion virtual worlds for both work and play.

If the deal survives scrutiny from U.S. and European regulators in the coming months, it could be one of the biggest tech acquisitions in history. Dell bought data-storage company EMC in 2016 for around \$60 billion.

Activision has been buffeted for months by allegations of misconduct and unequal pay. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella addressed the issue Tuesday in a conference call with investors.

"The culture of our organization is my No. 1 priority," Nadella said, adding that "it's

critical for Activision Blizzard to drive forward" on its commitments to improve its workplace culture.

Activision disclosed last year it was being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission over complaints of workplace discrimination and in September settled claims brought by U.S. workforce discrimination regulators. California's civil rights agency sued the Santa Monica-based company in July, citing a "frat boy" culture that had become a "breeding ground for harassment and discrimination against women."



Princess Rita Boncompagni Ludovisi stands beneath a fresco by Italian Baroque painter Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, known as Guercino, inside The Casino dell'Aurora, also known as Villa Ludovisi, in Rome, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021.

AP PHOTO/GREGORIO BORGIA, FILE

Actor-comedian Louie Anderson undergoing cancer treatment

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Louie Anderson is being treated for cancer in a Las Vegas hospital, a spokesman for the actor and comedian said.

Anderson, 68, was diagnosed with a type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma and "is resting comfortably," his longtime publicist Glenn Schwartz said Tuesday.

A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, Anderson lives in Las Vegas.

He won a 2016 Emmy for

best supporting actor for his unlikely role in the comedy "Baskets" as Christine Baskets, mom to twin sons played by Zach Galifianakis. Anderson received three consecutive Emmy nods for his performance.



Anderson

He's been a familiar face elsewhere on TV, including as host of

a revival of the game show "Family Feud" from 1999 to 2002, and on comedy specials and in frequent late-night talk show appearances.

Anderson voiced an animated version of himself as a kid in "Life With Louie." He created the cartoon series, which first aired in prime time in late 1994 before moving to Saturday morning for its 1995-98 run. Anderson won two Daytime Emmy Awards for the role.

Anderson has appeared in series including "Scrubs" and "Touched by an Angel" and on the big screen in 1988's "Coming to America" and in last year's sequel to the Eddie Murphy comedy.

He regularly tours as a stand-up comedian, Schwartz said.

'Harder They Fall,' 'Insecure,' 'H.E.R.' nab NAACP awards noms

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Netflix could be a dominant force at next month's NAACP Image Awards.

The streaming giant on Tuesday emerged with a leading 52 nominations including the film "The Harder They Fall." The movie—featuring a large starry cast including Regina King, Jonathan Majors, Idris Elba and LaKeith Stanfield—pulled in 12 nominations, including for best picture. Netflix landed 23 nominations in the television/streaming categories.

"The Harder They Fall," produced by Jay-Z, is based on real Black characters from the Old West who have generally been overlooked in the genre. The story follows Nat Love, a cowboy whose gun-slinging crew face off with Rufus Black, an outlaw who killed Love's parents years ago.

Issa Rae's "Insecure" earned 13 nominations including best comedy television series. "Harlem," "black-ish," "Run the World" and "The Upshaws" are also competing for best comedy series. "The Upshaws and

"Colin in Black & White" are among the Netflix series recognized by the Image Awards.

H.E.R. received the most nominations in the music recording categories with six, including best female artist and album for her project "Back of My Mind." She will compete in the outstanding album category against Silk Sonic's "An Evening with Silk Sonic," Drake's "Certified Lover Boy," Jazmine Sullivan's "Heaux Tales" and "When It's All Said and Done... Take Time" by Giv'eon."

When going gets tough, husband locks his door

DEAR ABBY: When my husband and I fight, which isn't really that often, he shuts himself away for several days. He locks the door to his office or the guest room and won't come out. I try to give him time to cool off, but sometimes it's awkward. He wouldn't talk to me at all for several days while his whole family was here celebrating his grandma's 90th birthday.

He's mad again. I apologized by text since he wouldn't talk to me, but our kids—ages 6 and 8—are going to wonder why Daddy isn't with us. Should I skip a planned event and give him more time to cool off or try to approach him?

WAITING FOR HIM IN GEORGIA

DEAR WAITING: Skip the planned event, and when your passive-aggressive husband comes out of hiding, INSIST the two of you get marriage counseling to resolve your differences. What he has been doing isn't healthy for your marriage. Dealing with conflict by hiding and using the silent treatment to punish one's spouse sets a poor example for your children, who are old enough to recognize that something is wrong between Daddy and Mommy. If he won't do it for the sake of your marriage, he should do it for the emotional health of those kids.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I will be meeting an old high school friend

for lunch. We are now in our 50s. I heard through the grapevine that she never had children. I am unsure what to say when the subject of children comes up, as it invariably will. "I'm sorry" may not be appropriate because perhaps she never wanted any. "Wow" or "interesting" may sound a bit odd.

In a similar vein, what does one say to someone when they share that they are divorced? I recall a woman I met telling me she was divorced. I said, "I'm sorry," and she replied, "I'm not!" What's an appropriate response for when these situations happen? I don't want to appear unsympathetic, but perhaps they don't want sympathy.

SYMPATHETIC IN FLORIDA

DEAR SYMPATHETIC: You may have hit on something. The birthrate in the United States is at an all-time low because many women have chosen to forgo motherhood. If someone tells you she doesn't have children, all you have to say is "Oh," and change the subject. You should not interrogate the person further. As for the subject of divorce, sometimes dissolution of a marriage is therapeutic. Do not ask for—or expect—more details. Show an interest in what your old friend is doing NOW and move on from there.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My late husband was a dentist. Should I include his DDS degree on his headstone?

NOT SURE IN THE SOUTH

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR NOT SURE: Although your husband may be deceased and no longer practicing dentistry, it doesn't make him any less a dentist. He earned his degree. If you would like it carved in granite, I don't see why it shouldn't be. Inquire at the cemetery about its protocol.

■■■

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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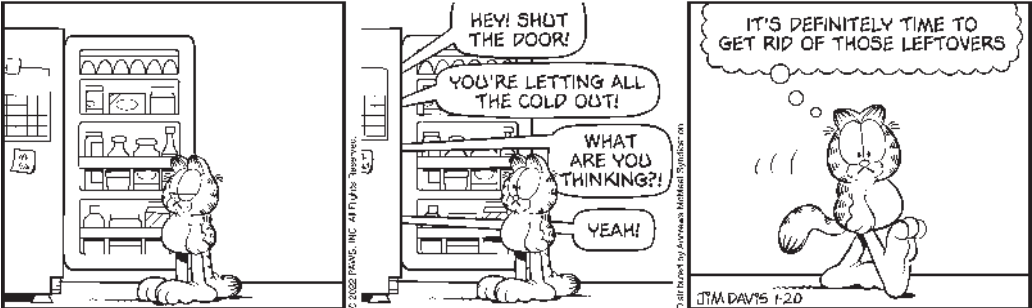
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

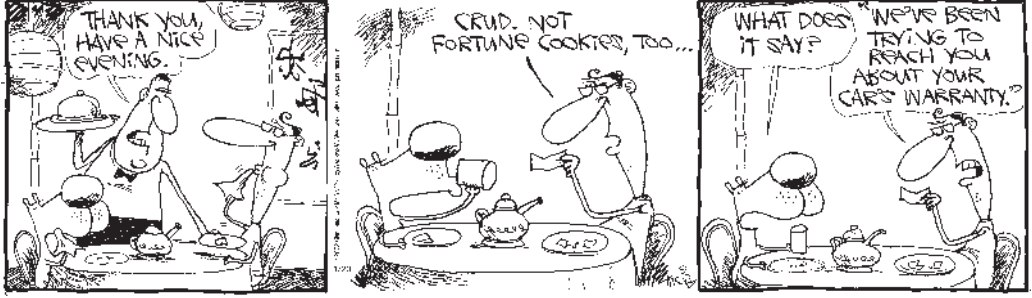
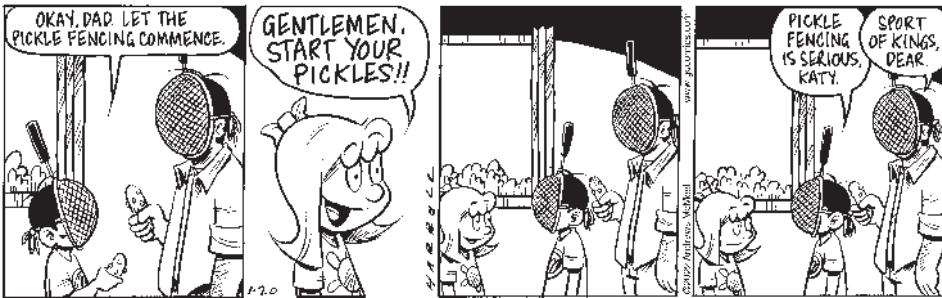


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 "House" actor Omar 5 Nick and Nora's dog 9 Mountain pass 12 Mend socks 13 "— to differ!" 14 Flamenco cheer 15 Mama-duck, for one 17 Allow 18 Realm 19 Protuberances 21 French article 22 Filled fully 24 Gear teeth 27 Understood 28 Hoodwink 31 Scary cry 32 Flying saucer 33 Perch 34 Attempt 36 Knock 37 School support orgs.

38 Object (to) 40 Battery size 41 Ibsen's Gabler 43 Golfer Sorenstam 47 Land in la mer 48 Bruce Springsteen hit 51 JFK regulator 52 "Her" actress Rooney 53 Taj Mahal site 54 Unwell 55 Melville mariner 56 Detergent

DOWN 1 Rim 2 Italian cheese, for short 3 Ready, as for surgery 4 Slow-pokes 5 Staffer 6 Govt. loan agcy. 7 Toe count 8 Representative 9 Pricey powder 10 Sheltered 11 Favorites 16 Three, in Rome 20 British ref. work 22 To date 23 Perched on 24 "NCIS" airer 25 Sound of delight 26 Bargain 27 Mentor 29 Zadora of "Hair-spray" 30 Roswell visitors 35 Slugger Williams 37 Bamboo eaters 39 Molten rock 40 Some 41 LP player 42 Israeli airline 43 Basra resident 44 Shakespeare villain 45 Actress Sedgwick 46 Pronto 49 — -di-dah 50 Mouths (Lat.)

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-20

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rukya Bernard, 39; Skeet Ulrich, 52; Rainn Wilson, 56; David Lynch, 76.

Happy Birthday: Look around you, size up situations and head in a direction that feels good. Following someone will result in dissatisfaction and wasting time. Revisit your dreams and aspirations, and you'll come up with a plan that excites you. Pour your emotions into your pursuits this year, and you'll come up with something extraordinary and fruitful. Your numbers are 6, 14, 19, 27, 34, 41, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't waste time. Set up a conversation with someone who can help you reach your goals. A change to how you earn or handle your money will require attention. Don't put your trust in someone else. Take charge and limit spending. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Uncertainty will test your patience. Separate yourself from situations that are beyond your control. Put your time and energy into personal improvement and spending time with someone who gives back and lifts your spirits. Romance is in the stars. *****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep life simple. Don't overdo it or let your emotions take over, putting you in a compromising position. Stick to the truth, and make only necessary changes. How you conduct yourself around others will determine your success. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Reach out to friends and relatives. A demonstrative approach regarding what you want will grab attention and encourage others to support

you. Share your feelings and intentions, and it will enhance a meaningful relationship. Romance is encouraged. ****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Listen to suggestions, adjust and carry on until you finish what you start. Leave nothing to chance or in someone else's hands. Step up and be the one to make a difference. Put your energy and effort where it will help most. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Channel your energy and your anger into something physical. Pent-up emotions used to improve a situation can be a game changer, but left to fester, they can leave you feeling down and out. Choose peace, love and happiness over discord. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Keep your money, possessions and personal papers in a safe place. Sharing information can backfire and cost you financially if you are too trusting. Pay attention to what others do and say, and follow up to make sure it's all accurate. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Look at what others do, and listen to what someone implies that might affect your life. An emotional situation will revive old wounds if left to fester. Be open to suggestions, but don't make changes to appease others. Protect your interests. **

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Refuse to step outside your comfort zone, regardless of the temptation. Conversations laced with promise will be unrealistic and confusing. Look for signs that are relevant to something you can pursue that's tangible. Keep your life sim-

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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ple, meaningful and cost-efficient. *****

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Improve your space to suit your lifestyle. Move things around, and get rid of clutter. You'll feel relieved when you have free space to pursue an activity you enjoy. Concentrate on your mental and physical well-being. An opportunity looks lucrative. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Dig in and do your part. What you bring to the table will put you in a position of leadership. Lend a helping hand, and you'll gain perspective regarding life, love, happiness and how to turn your dream into a reality. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Put your energy where it counts; if you take on too much, you'll find it challenging to get things done. Reach out to people you can count on for help. You will receive compliments for a change you make. ***

Birthday Baby: You are inventive, wise and friendly. You are restless and adventuresome.

☾ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼ Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	2	9			5					
		1						9		
				9	7			3	8	
2		5		7		1				
		7		9		5		4		
4	7		2		1					
9						6				
			8			3	2			

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/20

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	9	2	4	6	3	8	1	5
4	6	8	1	9	5	7	3	2
1	3	5	8	7	2	9	4	6
5	2	9	3	8	1	4	6	7
8	4	7	5	2	6	1	9	3
3	1	6	7	4	9	2	5	8
6	7	3	2	1	4	5	8	9
2	5	4	9	3	8	6	7	1
9	8	1	6	5	7	3	2	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

FINDING RELIEF

Solution: 11 letters

E	K	A	L	S	H	O	R	E	M	U	H	R		
©	Ⓐ	Ⓛ	Ⓜ	E	T	R	O	P	S	C	T	Y	E	E
A	E	H	E	I	V	O	M	A	O	E	D	L	A	M
L	K	C	H	G	U	A	L	I	K	R	A	N	L	E
O	A	P	S	S	O	R	N	A	T	Y	G	T	D	
S	B	E	E	S	N	E	A	T	I	P	N	O	H	Y
E	T	B	A	R	L	L	E	O	A	I	K	S	H	B
S	C	G	L	A	B	C	N	R	N	O	A	U	C	B
I	E	P	X	E	A	S	E	N	O	T	I	N	T	O
C	N	E	O	E	H	H	U	C	A	R	E	S	E	H
R	N	E	P	I	T	R	E	V	I	T	A	E	R	C
E	O	L	P	O	S	I	T	I	V	E	U	T	T	I
X	C	S	S	E	N	T	I	F	D	A	E	R	S	S
E	N	A	P	P	I	N	G	N	D	A	N	C	E	U
Y	L	I	M	A	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	W	I	M

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1/20

Bake, Beach, Blanket, Break, Calm, Care, Connect, Cook, Creative, Dance, Ease, Exercise, Family, Fitness, Friends, Health, Hobby, Humor, Hydrate, Lake, Laugh, Massage, Movie, Music, Napping, Nature, Paint, Peace, Pets, Positive, Read, Relationships, Relax, Remedy, Running, Salon, Shower, Sleep, Solace, Sport, Stretch, Sunset, Swim, Therapy, Travel

Yesterday's Answer: Disposable

The NEW Treasures 46 and 47 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6430.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Towns' 3-point play helps Wolves edge Knicks, 112-110



NEW YORK (AP)—

This was always Jacqueline Cruz-Towns' favorite game, when her family could gather to watch her son play the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden.

She died of complications related to COVID-19 in April 2020, but Karl-Anthony Towns' father, sister and other friends and family were in the arena Tuesday night.

He gave them a great memory—and the Minnesota Timberwolves a big victory.

Towns converted a go-ahead three-point play with 29 seconds left and the Timberwolves edged the Knicks 112-110.

Towns, who grew up nearby in New Jersey, looked up toward the roof on his first trip to the free throw line, a way of remembering his mother.

His last trip to the line ended up winning the game.

"I told my dad everyone's going to get a chance to have their Madison Square Garden moment and I felt that was for me tonight. That was the biggest moment that I've had in MSG," Towns said. "Great crowd, great atmosphere, great energy and I got to silence everybody, so that makes it even better."

The Knicks got a strong game from Kemba Walker in his return from a nine-game absence with a sore left knee and nursed a lead for most of the fourth quarter.

But the Timberwolves rallied and then held on when Alec Burks missed a 3-point shot that would have won it for



Minnesota Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns (32) drives to the basket against New York Knicks guard Immanuel Quickley (5) and New York Knicks center Taj Gibson (67) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022 in New York.

New York.

"I definitely wanted to win, but we've got to keep grinding it out," Walker said. "This league is hard. It's hard to win games in this league."

Anthony Edwards scored 21 points and Towns had 20 for the Wolves, who won for the sixth time in eight games to level their record at 22-22. D'Angelo Russell added 17 points.

Evan Fournier scored 27 points and Julius Randle had 21 for the Knicks, who lost for the second straight day and dipped back below .500 at 22-23. Walker scored 17 of his 19

points in the second half.

"It was a hard-fought game and didn't get it done down the stretch," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said.

The Knicks were protecting one-point leads when Walker made 3-pointers with 5:27 and 4:36 remaining, and his third straight made it 107-102 with 3:41 to play.

But the Wolves didn't allow another basket and forced a couple big turnovers.

"I think that was key to turn it around," Wolves coach Chris Finch said. "We got a couple steals right there and that led us to easy buckets."

Minnesota got the ball back for the pivotal possession after an instant replay review overturned a call and ruled the ball out of bounds off the Knicks with 48 seconds left. Towns made a strong move and scored while being fouled by Randle, making it 111-109.

Randle was fouled on the other end but made only one free throw, leaving Minnesota ahead by one. Patrick Beverley made one free throw with 19 seconds left and that was it for the scoring.

Towns scored 11 points in the first quarter, helping Minnesota take a 30-23 lead. The

Wolves pushed their lead to 12 in the second quarter before taking a 61-51 lead to the break.

The Knicks scored 40 points in the third, taking a 91-86 lead to the fourth.

Warriors 102, Pistons 86

In San Francisco, Klay Thompson scored 21 points, Stephen Curry had 18, and the Golden State Warriors returned from a tough trip to beat the Detroit Pistons 102-86 on Tuesday night.

Curry, back after a one-game absence, shot 6 for 11 with four

3-pointers and added eight assists. He fell on his right hand during a win at Chicago on Friday, then missed Sunday's 119-99 loss at Minnesota.

Andrew Wiggins scored 19 points for a Warriors team happy to be home for an extended stretch after having lost five of seven, including three of four on the road.

Thompson — Curry's Splash Brother who was cheered by the Chase Center crowd every time he subbed back into the game — missed his initial two shots before connecting from deep in his second home game since returning from two devastating injuries and surgeries that cost him more than 2 1/2 years.

Golden State made six of its first nine 3-pointers to build a 33-22 lead after the opening quarter.

Isaiah Stewart had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Pistons in another lopsided defeat after a 135-108 home loss to the Phoenix Suns on Sunday.

Detroit reserve Rodney McGruder scored a season-high 19 points with four 3-pointers.

Draymond Green sat out for a fifth straight game with a left calf injury caused by a hurt disk in his lower back. The Warriors are being cautious with the do-everything veteran.

"They are doing plenty of rehab and he is making improvements every day," coach Steve Kerr said. "We'll re-evaluate in two weeks."

Rookie Jonathan Kuminga earned a starting nod in Green's place and finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Virus, injuries, standings all factor in NBA trade deadline

By **PAT GRAHAM**
AP SPORTS WRITER

LeBron James issued an apology on social media to Laker Nation after a recent blowout loss.

With it, a promise: "... we'll be better!"

James and the Lakers are currently in a position where they would compete in a play-in tournament following the end of the regular season. Not ideal, of course.

Really, though, the mantra for any team this season should be just get in—any way possible. Given the array of injuries to big-name players and the hour-by-hour uncertainty due to the virus, being healthy heading into the playoffs is more of a priority this season than usual.

That's a major reason why the impending trade deadline on Feb. 10 could be quite a dilemma for general managers. Because the standings really may not give an ac-

curate reflection of where a team stands.

Imagine these scenarios: Jamal Murray re-joining reigning MVP Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets in time for a postseason run. Or Victor Oladipo in Miami, if he continues to progress from the leg surgery that has kept him out for almost a full year. Or perhaps, the Los Angeles Clippers getting back Kawhi Leonard.

Consider the impact of Anthony Davis returning to the Lakers lineup.

Any or all of that likely alters the landscape.

So while occasionally glancing at the NBA standings —like Nuggets coach Michael Malone will do—don't overthink it.

"We've had injuries. We've had COVID. But again, we're not saying, 'Woe is me,'" Malone said. "Because this is our reality and you have to deal with it."

Klay Thompson recently

returned following his two-plus-year absence from the Golden State lineup, not to mention Kyrie Irving finally being able to make his season debut for Brooklyn after a months-long standoff sparked by his vaccination status. Now, the Nets are expected to be without Kevin Durant for an undetermined timeframe due to a sprained medial collateral ligament (MCL).

One thing recent postseason runs have shown is that peaking at the right time is at least as important if not more than seeding during that time. Last year's conference finals featured the No. 2 and No. 4 seeds in the West, plus the No. 3 and No. 5 seeds in the East. The season before that, a No. 5 seed in Miami made the NBA Finals. In 2018, James took fourth-seeded Cleveland to the title series.

So even if teams like the Nuggets or the Clippers might not have their desired

seed come playoff time, it's certain either of those teams would happily exchange a chance to open a series at home for having stars like Murray — maybe even Michael Porter Jr.—or Leonard back and ready to go.

"One day at a time is really a mantra that we have to live by," Malone said.

Malone and his staff recently discussed how this season just might be even more challenging than the two before.

Granted, the bubble playoffs were difficult with the long isolation.

And last season was a challenge in navigating all the protocols.

But this season — which reached the halfway point — may be next-level complex and filled with more uncertainty. About the time a team finds some consistency or rhythm, a key player(s) — or coach(es) — enters the league's health and safety

protocols.

The Clippers remain another team currently in a play-in spot in the West. A return of Paul George and possibly Leonard could be the boost they need to return to the conference finals.

Or they might just become sellers at the trade deadline.

In Portland, Blazers first-year coach Chauncey Billups has had quite an initiation. He's dealt with big injury after big injury, including dynamic guards Damian Lillard (surgery to treat an abdominal injury) and CJ McCollum (collapsed lung).

"This year has been unbelievable," said Billups, who saw McCollum return in Monday's win over Orlando as the Blazers remain 10th in the West. "It's just been crazy. ... But it's making me a better coach."

Inevitably, there will be frustration, like after the Lakers lost 133-96 to the Nuggets over the weekend. Lakers great and Hall of Famer Magic Johnson sounded off on social media: "... we as

(at)Lakers fans can accept being outplayed but we deserve more than a lack of effort and no sense of urgency. Owner (at)JeanieBuss, you deserve better."

Guard Russell Westbrook was asked about Johnson's assessment in what's been a Lakers season littered with injuries, including Davis being sidelined since mid-December due to a sprained ligament in his left knee.

"Everybody's entitled in this world to their opinion, regardless of what that is," Westbrook said, adding that Johnson is not around the team every day. "He's not aware of kind of what's going on internally with us and trying to figure things out."


The Lakers are not alone in navigating their next steps.

"It's like a crap shoot every single night," Billups said. "Everybody is dealing with this stuff. Every team. If it's not COVID, then it's injuries. I mean everybody."

Bottom line for fans and teams alike: Just hang on and hang in.

Pack set for 49ers rematch after winning September thriller

By STEVE MEGARGEE
AP SPORTS WRITER

 It was the rally that sparked the Green Bay Packers toward the NFL's best regular-season record.

The Packers had split their first two games — a blowout loss to New Orleans and a home victory over Detroit — before visiting San Francisco for a Sunday night matchup. After getting the ball at Green Bay's 25-yard line with 37 seconds and no timeouts left, Aaron Rodgers drove the Packers into position for Mason Crosby's 51-yard winning field goal as time expired.

That 30-28 victory was part of a seven-game winning streak that helped the Packers win a third straight NFC North title. Nearly four months after that Sept. 26 thriller, the Packers (13-4) and 49ers (11-7) meet again Saturday night in an NFC divisional playoff game.

"Getting that win streak and getting everything rolling, it was huge, the implications on the NFC and the standings," Packers running back Aaron Jones said.

The Packers used that game as a catalyst to earn the NFC's No. 1 seed, which included a first-round bye and home-field advantage for the conference playoffs. Saturday's forecast in Green Bay calls for a high temperature of 21 and a low of 5 with a 50% chance of snow.

"Hoping for a loud crowd that has a nice enjoyable afternoon, maybe doesn't go too hard, leaves some room for some enjoyment from like 7-10:30 p.m. on Saturday night," Rodgers said. "It's an exciting opportunity to be back at Lambeau for a playoff game in prime time."

Quite a bit has changed since these teams last met.

San Francisco's Elijah Mitchell missed the regular-



Green Bay Packers kicker Mason Crosby (2) kicks the game-winning field goal from the hold of Corey Bojorquez during the second half of an NFL football game against the San Francisco 49ers in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021.

season matchup with a shoulder injury. Deebo Samuel had a season-low 52 yards from scrimmage, including zero yards rushing on just two carries.

Samuel, an All-Pro receiver, has since become a major factor in the 49ers' ground attack and teamed up with Mitchell for 168 yards rushing on 37 carries in a 23-17 victory at Dallas on Sunday. They could bother a Green Bay run defense that allowed three of its last five opponents to gain at least 5 1/2 yards per carry.

Two seasons ago, the 49ers rushed for 285 yards in a 37-20 NFC championship game victory over the Packers. Raheem

Mostert, who ran for 220 yards and four touchdowns that day, won't be available Saturday after suffering a knee injury in the 49ers' season opener.

"This is a physical football team that brings in all three phases, offensively, defensively and on special teams," Packers coach Matt LaFleur said. "And we are going to have to get our minds right to have a physical football game."

The changes for the 49ers aren't restricted to the running game.

Rookie cornerback Ambry Thomas was left inactive for the loss to the Packers but has since become a vital contributor. Jauan Jennings, who has

emerged as a reliable third-down target late in the season, played just three offensive snaps in the regular-season loss to the Packers.

"It's just nice to see when a team's executing better," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. "When you feel like guys are practicing, playing better together as a unit. And I think we're in a better spot now than we were at that time."

One thing that hasn't changed about the 49ers: They're still capable of delivering major comebacks.

They trailed Green Bay 17-0 back in September but took a 28-27 lead in the final minute before Rodgers and

Crosby came through. The 49ers fell behind 17-0 again in the final week of the regular season but secured a playoff berth by coming back to beat the Los Angeles Rams 27-24 in overtime on the road.

The 49ers followed that by grabbing a 23-7 lead at Dallas and holding on for the victory. A third straight road upset this weekend would send the 49ers to the NFC championship game.

"If you look at them as of late, this is a confident group," LaFleur said of the 49ers. "You can see it on tape. You can see it in how they've played. We're going to have to play every play like it's our

last play for the duration of the game."

Packers offensive tackle David Bakhtiari didn't practice Tuesday. Bakhtiari made his season debut Jan. 9 at Detroit, more than a year after tearing his anterior cruciate ligament on Dec. 31, 2020. "It's more load management. We'll see how he's feeling tomorrow and the next day and see where he's at on game day," LaFleur said. Packers OT Billy Turner, who hasn't played since a Dec. 12 knee injury, was a full practice participant. Packers CB Jaire Alexander, who hasn't played since injuring his right shoulder Oct. 3, practiced on a limited basis.

Titans lean on Tannehill's experience vs young Joe Burrow

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Ryan Tannehill disputes the idea he ever lost his mojo as the Tennessee Titans quarterback.

In a season where Tannehill was one of only three Titans on the offense to start every game during the regular season, the 10-year veteran led Tennessee to a 12-5 record and the AFC's No. 1 seed. That's a first for a quarterback who never played in the postseason until coming to Tennessee in 2019.

That makes having a third straight shot at playoff success even more fun for a quarterback who loves winning.

"I love doing that and I'm proud of our guys and the way we've ... fought through a lot

and continued to find ways to win," Tannehill said. "So, it hasn't always been perfect and pretty — it's football, it never is. So, the fact that we can continue to find ways to win has been a lot of fun."

Now the Titans hope to tap into Tannehill's experience Saturday in the divisional round against his young counterpart, Joe Burrow.

The quarterback who won the national championship with LSU before becoming the No. 1 pick in the 2020 draft just snatched a 31-year playoff win drought for the Cincinnati Bengals (11-7) in his NFL postseason debut.

"I've played in a lot of big games throughout my ca-

reer," Burrow said Tuesday. "Whether it's this year, I mean every game the last half of the season was a playoff game or those games playing in the college football playoffs and the national championship I think I've been in that situation before."

Tannehill, the highest player drafted in 2012 still playing, will be making his fifth playoff start with Tennessee. He has postseason wins over Tom Brady and Lamar Jackson from the Titans' run to the AFC championship game two years ago.

Titans coach Mike Vrabel has made it clear he loves Tannehill, particularly the quarterback's toughness. Only

Burrow was sacked more (51) than Tannehill (47) during the regular season.

"His toughness is second to none," Vrabel said. "I know that being a professional quarterback requires a level of toughness. I am not going to say that our guys aren't tough, but we know that Ryan has a very high ability to stand in there and not flinch."

Cincinnati coach Zac Taylor knows that, and Tannehill, only too well. He was a graduate assistant at Texas A&M when Tannehill played both wide receiver and quarterback, and Taylor also coached quarterbacks including Tannehill for four seasons with the Dolphins.

Taylor said Tannehill can make every throw and the former pre-med student could have played receiver in the NFL if he had wanted. Tannehill caught 55 passes for 844 yards and five touchdowns his first season in college.

"He's a tremendous quarterback," Taylor said. "It's no surprise he's helped that team get in the position they've been in these last couple of years. He really executes that offense at a high level and he can make a defense pay if you let him. They've got the right quarterback on board there."

Tannehill's experience certainly paid off for Tennessee as Titans shuffled through 91 players, an NFL record in a non-strike season.

Derrick Henry, the 2020 AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year, missed the final nine games. Wide receivers A.J. Brown and Julio Jones both had stints on injured reserve.

So while Burrow was rewriting the Bengals' record book with a 108.3 passer rating, 4,611 yards passing and 34 TDs, Tannehill's best statistic might be how the Titans won their most games and also earned the No. 1 seed for the first time since 2008.

Tannehill did match his career high with seven TD runs, but he had his lowest passer rating since 2015. He also had 14 interceptions while throwing for 3,734 yards and 21 TDs. He helped the Titans win three of their final four games to clinch that top seed.

Middle school girls volleyball league kicks off

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season kicked off last Tuesday with four teams on tap at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Public School System Athletic Program director Nick Gross is relieved that the league finally got going after several delays caused by the rise in COVID-19 transmissions on Saipan.

"After months of cancellations and delays we're excited to finally get athletic programs back online! I'd like to thank the community and most especially the students, coaches, and officials for believing in the need to return to sports and following the updated safety protocols that have been put in place. With everyone's cooperation and adherence to the protocols I believe we can safely and successfully restart athletic



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Both teams of Saipan International School seeing action in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season pose for a group photo at the start of the competition Tuesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

programs for the students of the CNMI," he said.

Even some of the coaches of the teams taking part in the middle school volleyball competition were happy to return to the court.

"We have been waiting for this opportunity. We appreciate it. We have been lucky to have face-to-face classes but many other students were online for long time. Having the chance to play sports and

compete with other schools make us have a sense of 'normality.' Just to have the experience to play means a lot to our students," said Saipan International School acting coach Mili Chaves De Saiki.

Tanapag Middle School coach Catherine Woodruff echoed De Saiki's comments.

"Happy to be back in the game and to see the students enjoy it once again. Hopefully, TMS will defend its title from last year," she said.

In the actual games, Grace Christian Academy 2 won its debut against SIS 1, 21-11, 21-6, in the north court. In the south court, SIS 2 prevailed over Mt. Carmel School 1, 21, 11, 21-6.

In the second games, TMS 1 got the better of Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, 21-11, 21-9, in the south court. While in the north court, Saipan Community School walked away with a win over Hopwood Middle School in a forfeit.

Games will resume on Monday at the MHS Gym.

The NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season is sanctioned by the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association.

AVENDANO

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Golf Links in Talafofo with an 11:30am tee off this time.

The second round of the yearend tourney will coincide with the club's January Ace of the Month

Tournament.

An awards ceremony for the Ace of Aces Tournament will be held starting 7pm on Jan. 22 at the Jang Gun Korean Restaurant across the former Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan along Royal Palm Avenue in Garapan.

Last year, Henry Bautista won the 2020 Fil-Taga Golfers Association's Ace of Aces Tournament after finishing the two-round competition with a net 138.

The 16-handcapper shot a net 73 in the first round of play at the Laolao Bay Golf

& Resort before carding a net 65 in the second and final round of the season-ending competition at the Kingfisher Golf Links. Hak Chon Bae came in second with a two-round total of net 143 with Ruben Avendano completing the Top 3 with a net 144.

Ash Barty marks First Nations Day with easy win in Australia



MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Ash Barty was front and center when the Australian

Open celebrated its inaugural First Nations Day.

Albeit not for very long. The top-ranked Barty has Indigenous heritage and her second-round match at Melbourne Park's main stadium on Wednesday was among the features of a program dedicated to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

She was on and off the court quickly, beating 142nd-ranked qualifier Lucia Bronzetti 6-1, 6-1 in 52 minutes.

"It was really cool. It was nice for me to be a part of it in a way that I feel most comfortable," Barty said. "Out on the tennis court is how I express myself as an athlete, it's how I'm able to express myself as a person as well."

"On a day we're bringing cultures together, bringing people together ... it was great for me to be able to play a small role doing what I love."

Rafael Nadal didn't get it all his own way in the next match on Rod Laver Arena, needing five match points before beating 126th-ranked German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.

The sixth-seeded Nadal, aiming for a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title, had two match points on Hanfmann's serve and two more on his own in the next game before finally clinching a spot in the third round when his rival sent a forehand long.

Nadal converted four of his

16 break-point chances, including one of eight in the third set, but only faced two break points on his own serve and fended them both off.

For the 35-year-old Nadal, after fatigue and injuries curtailed his 2021 season following the French Open, the time on court is more important than anything else.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	27	16	.628	—
Philadelphia	25	18	.581	2
Toronto	21	20	.512	5
Boston	23	22	.511	5
New York	22	23	.489	6

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	28	16	.636	—
Charlotte	24	20	.545	4
Washington	23	21	.523	5
Atlanta	18	25	.419	9½
Orlando	8	37	.178	20½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	27	15	.643	—
Cleveland	27	18	.600	1½
Milwaukee	27	19	.587	2
Indiana	15	29	.341	13
Detroit	10	33	.233	17½

WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	31	15	.674	—
Dallas	25	19	.568	5
San Antonio	16	28	.364	14
New Orleans	16	28	.364	14
Houston	13	32	.289	17½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	29	15	.659	—
Denver	22	20	.524	6
Minnesota	22	22	.500	7
Portland	18	25	.419	10½
Oklahoma City	14	29	.326	14½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	34	9	.791	—
Golden State	32	12	.727	2½
L.A. Lakers	22	22	.500	12½
L.A. Clippers	22	23	.489	13
Sacramento	18	28	.391	17½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AQUINO

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In the mixed doubles 3.0, top seeds Yutaka Kadokura and Anne Lee took home the championship with a 6-0, 6-3 win over third seeds Taheir Shakir and Lina Tsukagoshi.

Kadokura and Lee punched their finals tickets with a 1-4,

4-2, 10-2 win over No. 4 Andrew Chung and Yebin Shin. They previously were also tested 4-2, 3-5, 10-4 by Dev Bachani and Maya Shimizu after getting a free pass in the first round.

Shakir and Tsukagoshi were 2-4, 4-0, 10-6 winners over Seiyul Hong and Jack Linden in the semis. They

also had a bye in the opener.

Results of the mixed doubles 5.0 and mixed doubles U18 will be reported in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune*.

The 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis was held as a fundraiser for Saipan International School's Student Council and is sanctioned by

the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

The sponsors of the event are the following: Mango Six Café, Sura Restaurant, Café 670, All Star Sporting Goods and Boarderline, Joeten Superstore, Plumeria Steakhouse, Java Joe's, Hyatt Regency Saipan, and Summer Snow Café.

END GOAL

From Page 20

Marianas Resort Strip 5K on Feb. 5 and the Marianas Ekiden in Feb. 19.

The month of March will also have a pair of events—the Beer Mile on March 13 and the Happy Hearts 5K on March 18.

April brings the Library 5K on April 23 followed by the long-busting Mt. Tapochao 5K on April 30.

Star Wars fans will be glad for the return of the May the 4th 5K on May 7 (May 4 is a Wednesday). It's such an awesome event that it's the only one on calendar for the month.

The Mangrove Run is set for June 4 followed by the 2 Mile Independence Day Race on the Fourth of July itself. The Laolao Bay Kulot Acha'ikak will then happen

on July 9 and from July 22 to 25 is the Virtual 5K.

The three-event calendar of July will be succeeded by singles events for the next four months—the Grotto 10K on Aug. 20, the ICC 5K on Sept. 17, the Beach Road Sunset 5K on Oct. 14, and the Kagman 5K on Nov. 19.

Run Saipan will then cap the year with a bang with three races in December—the first-ever Run Saipan Half Marathon on Dec. 10 followed by the Run Saipan Banquet on the same day. The 2nd Annual Run from 22 1 Mile Race will then serve as its bookend event on Dec. 31.

Dela Cruz said the 2022 events calendar of Run Saipan was a culmination of months-long planning with the rest of the non-profit's officers—vice president Jenna Kong, secretary/treasurer Ron Snyder, and board members Tania Tan and

Robin Sapong.

"This was a long term plan I had since February 2021. I started the 5K series every month as an experiment to gauge how many participants we get while also trying various race routes and getting to know all the runners that come. Especially the ones that participated with us frequently."

As much as possible, Dela Cruz said they took cues from participants on their runs and tried to accommodate them when they finalized their 2022 events calendar.

"Whatever happened in 2021 was to build the base foundation for our calendar into 2022 based off the runners' response the entire year with the Run Saipan Underground 5K. So when the board met in November I laid down the data we had from the entire year."

Dela Cruz added that there are many types of runners on Saipan and Run Saipan wanted to be sure to cater to them all.

"We wanted to make a variety of distances at the same time we kept the routes that were most popular. The names on each of the calendar has a purpose. We were sure to plan around big events that happen on Saipan around the year as well," he said.

Run Saipan also would like to make a shout out to their event sponsors for 2022 and they are the following: Latte Built Gym, Northern Marianas Athletics, Marianas Visitors Authority, Atkins Kroll, Salty Skin Pacific, MARPAC, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, Saipan International School, Coalition of Private School Sports Association, and Northern Marianas College.



Towns' 3-point play helps Wolves edge Knicks, 112-110
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Saipan Tribune Sports

Middle school girls volleyball league kicks off

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Avendano tops 1st round of Ace of Aces

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Ruben Avendano has a foot in the door of the Fil-Taga Golfers Association's Ace of Aces Tournament after shooting the lowest net score of the first round held last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort east course.

The 62-year-old Pacific Home Appliances staff shot a 43 in the front nine including a birdie in hole No. 5 and another 43 in the back nine for a gross score of 86. Minus his 19 handicap, Avendano shot a net 67—the best score of the day and on top of the leaderboard coming into the second round.

"Weather was cloudy but no rain so it was a good breeze. I did not use my sand wedge only pitching even around the green. Maybe I was just lucky

as I didn't encounter a bunker the whole game. I got lucky in hole No. 5 with a birdie," said the July monthly winner.

Ed Varias, Dan Ganacias, and Fred Cataluna fired identical 73s to finish second to Avendano in the opening round of the yearly championship.

Varias, the November ace, shot a gross of 92 (46-46) but thanks to his 19 handicap came away with a 73. February ace Ganacias came away

with a pre-handicap score of 84 (43-41), while October ace Cataluna, a 1-handicapper, fired the day's lowest gross score of 74 (39-35).

Avendano said he expects Cataluna and Ganacias to go all out in the second round of the Fil-Taga Ace of Aces Tournament.

"Freddie and Dan are the favorites. Their scores have been consistent all throughout. My score is up and down," he said.

The rest of the Ace of Aces Tournament qualifiers' net scores are the following: March ace Bae Hak Chon (74), December ace Bert Suda (74), January ace Henry Bautista (76), August ace Ronnie Santos (77), April ace Tony Cabrera (78), May ace William Retardo (78), June ace Lito Mendoza (78), and September ace Mike Cruz (78).

The second round of the Fil-Taga Ace of Aces Tournament will be held this Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Kingfisher

See AVENDANO on Page 19



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ruben Avendano smiles during a break in the action of the first round of Fil-Taga Golfers Association's Ace of Aces Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort east course.

Aquino, Lucero win mixed doubles 4.0

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Patrick Aquino and Gyan Lucero played beautiful music together en route to winning the mixed doubles 4.0 of the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

The unseeded tandem upset No. 1 seeds Irin Chung and June Yu, 6-1, 6-3, in the finals.

Aquino and Lucero's relatively easy match in the championship was in stark contrast to the nip-and-tuck struggle the pair encountered in the semifinals against second seeds Wataru Kadokura and Hoo Wang.

After dropping the opening set, 1-6, Aquino and Lucero forced a super tiebreaker with a 4-1 victory in the second. But it was just the beginning as both doubles teams fought tooth and nail before Aquino and Lucero managed to take the win.

"We were down 7-9, so they have two match points already but we still played our game and we did it at the end," said Aquino when asked about the



Lucero



Aquino

epic super tiebreaker against Chung and Yu.

He said his tandem with Lucero works because they're close friends off the court too.

"Were friends off the court. I think that's our advantage. No pressure and we are just enjoying the game," Aquino said, adding that Lucero is a natural athlete that can cover a lot of ground in the court.

Lucero, for her part, said they won the division because of their mental toughness and focus.

She said Aquino is a great doubles partner because he always guides and gives her a lot of tips when it comes to technique.

"He's more experienced and we always are having fun playing even it's not a

tournament," he said.

Chung and Yu barged into the finals with a 5-4, 4-2 victory over Sarka Glasjchova and Martin Jambor. They had a bye in the first round. Aquino and Lucero, meanwhile, beat Hannah Chae and Jung Wang, 4-1, 4-1, to advance to the semis.

See AQUINO on Page 19

End goal: 5K races every weekend

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Run Saipan burst out of the scene with their monthly 5-kilometer underground runs last year.

It may be one of the youngest sports organizations on Saipan, but that hasn't stopped its leadership from envisioning lofty goals for itself.

One such goal for Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. and company is to host weekly 5K races for the island's growing running community.

"I was always inspired

and motivated by Guam how they have a 5K race every weekend. We are trying to move in that direction on Saipan with monthly races first as well as having organization-sponsored races now. This year we have multiple races where an organization or person collaborates or sponsors our races. We hope those numbers grow next year."

Run Saipan is starting the year off with the Dash & Splash 5K at the Laolao Bay East Bay Side this coming Saturday, Jan. 22.

It will be followed by the **See END GOAL on Page 19**



MARK RABAGO

Run Saipan Team teams that took part in Northern Marianas Athletics' 2021 Christmas Island Relay pose for a group photo on the road along the Last Command Post in Marpi.